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SOVIET APPROACHES TO SALT — Thomas W. Wolfe

THE THOUGHT OF GARAUDY — Maurice Cranston

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Book Reviews

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Soviet Approaches to SALT

By Thomas W. Wolfe

When Soviet negotiators first sat down with an American delegation at Helsinki toward the end of 1969 to discuss strategic arms limitations, they did so against the background of a Soviet military buildup which had been underway for several years and which had served to narrow appreciably the margin of strategic power between the Soviet Union and the United States. At the time, owing in part to the Soviet habit of not airing strategic policy matters in open public debate, there was a good deal of uncertainty in the West with regard both to the aims of the Soviet strategic buildup and the motivations which lay behind the Kremlin's decision to enter the SALT talks themselves.

As the second round of closed-door negotiations at Vienna came to a close in mid-August 1970, before a scheduled shift back to Helsinki later in the year, the indications were that some progress was being made toward agreement on initial steps to regulate strategic arms competition between the two superpowers.[1] Despite this rather hopeful prognosis for the talks, however, it would appear that much of the original uncertainty concerning Soviet strategic aims and SALT motivations still persists. In bringing under scrutiny here some of the economic, technological and strategic questions which remain essentially unanswered thus far, it is perhaps well to note at the outset that the issues involved have a life of their own, so to speak, and can therefore be expected to make themselves felt in the future development of Soviet policy no matter how the next stages of the SALT talks may unfold.

Economic Considerations

At least three disparate schools of thought exist in the West on the extent to which economic constraints may impinge upon Soviet strategic policy and account for the Kremlin's interest in strategic arms negotiations with the United States. The first school regards economic problems as being a weighty, perhaps even an overriding, factor in per-

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[1] See page 9 below.

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suading the Soviet leaders to seek a genuine halt in the strategic arms competition, now that the Soviet Union has managed virtually to achieve parity with the United States in strategic forces. The main argument of this school is that Soviet needs for growth investment, for satisfaction of rising consumer claims, and for technological innovation in non-defense sectors of the economy would make it very difficult for the USSR to keep up in a large new round of strategic arms procurement, especially since this would place heavy demand on the kinds of advanced technical and economic resources in which the United States retains a lead. The need to fix the parameters for the next Five-Year Plan (1971-75) is also seen as a cogent economic reason for seeking to stabilize the strategic competition. Still another argument rests on the assumption that within the Soviet military establishment itself pressure groups for non-strategic forces such as the ground troops and the navy are interested in capturing more defense resources for their purposes, and therefore are probably amenable to settling for parity with the United States at the strategic level.

The slowdown in economic performance in 1968-69,[2] which has obviously been disturbing to the Soviet leadership and which, in early 1970, touched off an intensive campaign of economic criticism led by Brezhnev,[3] lends support, in this view, to the thesis that the Soviet economy is hurting from the expanded military programs of the past few years. Slippage of previously-planned investment for long-term economic growth in both nondefense industry and agriculture is likewise regarded as an adverse effect of high military priorities and a trend which the Soviet leadership would like to arrest.[4] As for the influence of what might be called the Soviet "military-industrial complex" on resource-allocation decisions, proponents of the first school of thought generally concede that such a lobby exists and carries considerable weight, but they tend to believe that in the final analysis it must abide by the decisions of the political leadership and can therefore be largely discounted as an obstacle to strategic arms agreements.

The second school of thought argues that economic constraints upon Soviet competition in strategic arms are less compelling than in the past for at least two reasons: first, because Soviet industrial output, despite some decline in growth rate, is still increasing at a respectable pace that has been sufficient to sustain the major Soviet strategic buildup of the past five years;[5] and second, because the United States—beset with domestic economic needs, the cost of the Vietnam war, and a rising tide of anti-military sentiment at home—appears reluctant to restore its own strategic arms expenditures to the levels it was once willing to accept, thus making it a less formidable competitor than formerly.

As evidence that Moscow has been more willing to raise the strategic ante than Washington, despite pressures upon the Soviet economy, supporters of this view can cite estimates that Soviet expenditures for strategic arms were running twice as high in 1968-69 as those of the United States.[6] The proposition that superior American economic resources may no longer serve of themselves to deter the Soviet Union from continuing the strategic competition is also buttressed, in this view, by Soviet writings which assert that internal problems in the United States and the Vietnam war have demonstrated the American economy's inability to provide "guns and butter simultaneously,"[7] and that growing opposition to the arms policies of the government is becoming politically significant among the

[2] Symptomatic of economic slowdown in 1968 was a decline of the industrial output growth rate to 8.1 percent from a claimed rate of almost 10 percent for the preceding year. In 1969 the industrial growth rate fell off further to 7 percent, while agricultural output was 3 percent less than the 1968 figure. See reports by N.K. Baibakov, Chairman of Gosplan, *Pravda*, Dec. 11, 1968, Dec. 17, 1969.

[3] This campaign, critical of economic mismanagement, slack labor discipline and other shortcomings, followed a report on unsatisfactory economic performance by Brezhnev at a Central Committee session on Dec. 15, 1969. For pertinent examples of economic criticism, see *Pravda*, Dec. 17, 31, 1969, Jan. 10, 13, 1970, and March 27, 1970; *Sotsialisticheskaia industriia*, March 24, 1970, and *Partiinaia zhizn*, March 1970, pp. 5-8.

[4] For discussion of investment slippage and the possible effects of rising military allocations on Soviet economic growth under the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime, see this author's paper, "Impact of Economic and Technological Issues on the Soviet Approach to SALT," P-4368, The RAND Corporation, Santa Monica, California, June 1970, pp. 5-7.

[5] In this connection, statistics published by *Izvestia* on April 17, 1970, showed an increase in several key economic indices, including industrial output, for the first quarter of 1970 over the same period in 1969. Should the improved industrial growth rate of 8.9 percent be sustained, the regime could not only count upon meeting its lowered economic targets for 1970, but would presumably be in a position at least to match its previous strategic program allocations.

[6] As stated in speeches by US Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird, on Feb. 25 and Aug. 26, 1969, Soviet strategic-force expenditures were at an annual rate of about $18 billion, more than double the US level.

[7] For typical Soviet appraisals of this sort, see review article of Georgi A. Arbatov, director of the new American Institute of the USSR Academy of Sciences, "Complex Problems, Difficult Solutions," *Izvestia*, Jan. 11, 1969, and his lead article in the Institute's Journal, *USA—Economics, Politics, Ideology*, January 1970, pp. 21-34.

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American intelligentsia and even within US "ruling circles."[8]

With regard to military-industrial influence upon Soviet policy, this school of thought tends to regard it as pervasive throughout the Soviet system—as suggested, for example, by the revealing comment of a Soviet economist, A. G. Aganbegian, that 40 percent of the Soviet economy is harnessed in one way or another to the defense industry sector.[9] Although the last word does rest with the political leaders in the Politburo, it is argued that these men themselves have always been dedicated to a policy of giving military-industrial goals first call on Soviet resources. Thus, the Politburo leaders are not likely to forego further strategic competition simply out of concern for the economic burden involved. Rather, the argument runs, they may well regard a parity transaction via SALT as a holding stratagem to inhibit new US programs while buying the Soviet Union time for a further technological effort intended to produce conditions for an eventual breakthrough to superiority.

According to a third view of the situation, which in this writer's judgment comes somewhat closer to the mark than either of the appraisals sketched above, economic pressures have doubtless helped to propel the Soviet Union into the SALT talks and probably will continue to pose sobering problems for the Soviet leadership in its competition with two rivals the size of the United States and China during the decade of the 1970's. At the same time, economic considerations do not appear to have been the prime determinant of Soviet strategic policy in the past, nor do they seem likely to be in the future. The Soviet leaders have said upon occasion that they will not let themselves be "intimidated" by those who feel that the Soviet economy cannot stand the strain of further arms competition, and perhaps one should take them at their word in this instance. Thus, while the Soviet leaders may be very reluctant to allow military allocations to increase more steeply than the economic growth rate for any extended period, it seems reasonable to suppose that they are prepared to tolerate an annual increase in military spending of at least 4 percent—that is, within the parameters set by an anticipated GNP growth rate of around 5 to 6 percent—*provided* that they consider such a level of military preparation necessary to support Soviet interests.

Technological Considerations

Despite impressive Soviet achievements in weapons and space technology, it has become widely recognized in the past few years that the Soviet Union is encountering many difficulties in adapting its industrial system to the scientific and technological revolution of the modern era. Just as in the related realm of economics, this situation has implications for Soviet strategic policy that are variously interpreted. Testimony to the lagging assimilation of new technology, outside of the defense sector, comes not only from Western analyses[10] but from the Soviet authorities themselves. Since early 1968, for example, when Kosygin warned that the Soviet Union could "be left behind" in scientific and technological competition unless it found ways to match the innovative practices of the advanced Western countries,[11] there have been numerous expressions of official concern over how to improve the introduction of scientific methods and findings into the Soviet economy.

The emergency of a technological gap between the Soviet Union and the West is certainly not due to unawareness in Moscow of the stakes involved. As proclaimed on several occasions by Brezhnev and other Communist leaders, the scientific-tech-

[8] A. Melnikov, "Intelligentsia of the USA: Numbers, Composition, Social Differentiation," *World Economics and International Relations*, January 1970, p. 111; V. Kulish and S. Fedorenko, "The Discussion in the USA over Strategic Arms," *ibid.*, March 1970, pp. 43-46.

[9] Cited in John P. Hardt, *Economic Insights on Current Soviet Policy and Strategy*, McLean, Va., Research Analysis Corporation, Dec. 1969, p. 28. Although Soviet writers often deny that there is any equivalent of a "military-industrial complex" in the Soviet Union (see, for example Colonel General K. Skorobogatkin, "In the Interests of Aggression and Profits," *Krasnaia zvezda*, Dec. 28, 1969), such a complex has a visible institutional anatomy in what Soviet sources customarily refer to as the "defense industry sector." This consists of eight industrial ministries having to do with various kinds of machine-building, aviation, shipbuilding, radio and electronics, and other areas of defense production. The activities of these industrial ministries are coordinated with the Ministry of Defense by Politburo member Dmitri Ustinov. The defense industry sector under Ustinov's supervision has often been cited as more efficient than the remainder of Soviet industry, owing perhaps to its having first call on resources, skills, new machinery, and so on.

[10] For a well-documented Western study, see E. Zaleski, J.P. Kozlowski, H. Wienert, R.W. Davies, M.J. Berry, R. Amann, *Science Policy in the USSR*, Paris, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 1969. See also R.V. Burks, *Technological Innovation and Political Change in Communist Europe*, The RAND Corporation, RM-6051-PR, Santa Monica, California, August 1969; Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Soviet Past and Future," *Encounter* (London), March 1970, p. 9; and Gertrude E. Schroeder's article in this issue.

[11] Speech by Premier A.N. Kosygin in Minsk, Feb. 14, 1968, in *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, Feb. 15.

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nological revolution "has become one of the main sectors of the historic competition between capitalism and socialism," entailing a "long and difficult struggle" in which it would be unwise "to underrate the forces of those with whom we have to compete. . . ."[12] Nor has there been any lack of effort on Moscow's part. Expenditures on research and development under the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime have more than doubled,[13] approaching in 1969 the amount spent in the US,[14] and the pool of Soviet scientific manpower has been steadily expanded.

Evidently, the barriers to the more rapid introduction of new technology in the Soviet Union have lain in the cumbersomeness of the bureaucracy and in the emphasis on quantitative production criteria —deficiences which neither the economic reforms initiated in October 1965 nor an overhaul of the research and development establishment decreed in October 1968[15] have managed to correct. In particular, Soviet authorities have complained that scientific discoveries made by research institutes are often obsolescent by the time they are adopted because insufficient attention has been given to development facilities in relevant industries.[16] The rather high proportion of overall Soviet research and development activities devoted to military purposes, as well as the segregation of secret military research from the rest of the economy, also may help to account for the slow diffusion of industrial technology.[17]

Whatever the reasons for the disparity in technological advance between the nondefense and the defense-associated sectors of the Soviet economy, the question of interest here is how this situation may relate to the shaping of Soviet strategic policy. On the one hand, it can be argued that the Soviet leaders have a further important incentive to seek a breathing spell in the arms competition in order to give their attention to closing the nondefense technological gap. A SALT agreement to stabilize the strategic arms balance would, in this view, also help to create conditions favorable for wider borrowing of Western technology—a means of catching up already evident in deals to import auto factories and systems-management techniques.

On the other hand, there seem to be limits on how far the Soviet leadership may find it feasible to borrow from the West. One of these is the ideological need to preserve the image of the Soviet system as an exemplary model better suited than the capitalist system to realize the potential of the scientific-technological revolution. Having proclaimed the decisive political importance of competition with the West in this sphere, the Soviet leaders would be inviting invidious comparison if they were to acknowledge too freely their dependence on Western prescriptions for technological progress. Concern that East European admiration for Western technological achievements might be exploited to the political disadvantage of the USSR is another possible brake on Soviet readiness to embrace reforms modeled on the Western example.

Within the Soviet governing establishment itself, resistance to major changes in technological organization and priorities might well stem also from those opposed to any transfer of key research and development resources to nondefense uses. Such groups could be expected to argue against tampering with the country's security by diverting Soviet technology from the very field in which it has competed most successfully with the West. With regard to the SALT talks, if this conception of the Soviet interest were to prevail in Moscow, one objective of Soviet policy presumably would be to steer clear of agreements which could have the effect of terminating Soviet efforts to overtake the United States in areas of military technology where the USSR still lags behind, such as MIRV, certain fields of electronics, data handling, and so on.

Strategic Considerations

Economic and technological issues apart, perhaps the central questions pertaining to Soviet strategic policy which remain unanswered by the SALT

[12] See, in particular, speech of June 7, 1969, by L.I. Brezhnev at the International Conference of Communist Parties in Moscow, in *Pravda*, June 8.

[13] The announced Soviet budgetary outlays for science (including research and development) rose from 5.2 billion rubles in 1964 to more than 11 billion rubles in 1970.

[14] Conversion of the announced Soviet scientific budget into real terms for comparative purposes presents problems similar to those posed by the military budget. According to Brzezinski (*Encounter*, March 1970, p. 9), Soviet spending for research and development in real terms was by 1969 "approximately as much" as that in the United States. This would put the comparative figure somewhere in the neighborhood of $26 billion. In the author's own opinion, the Soviet effort probably was between two-thirds and three-fourths of the US outlay.

[15] See joint recommendation of the Central Committee and the Council of Ministers, *Pravda*, Oct. 23, 1968.

[16] See, for example, V. Trapeznikov, "Time Lost and Saved: How Much Does It Cost?" *Pravda*, July 24, 1969; E. Grishaev, "The Strategy of Scientific-Technical Progress," *Sotsialisticheskaia industriia*, Nov. 29, 1969.

[17] How much of the total Soviet research and development outlay goes to military purposes is not known, since no breakdown of the budget figure is published. Past Western estimates have ranged from 25 to 75 percent. The author's guess would be that defense-related research and development probably accounts for about two-thirds of the total outlay.

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talks thus far turn upon the kind of strategic relationship with the United States that the Soviet Union has been seeking since it embarked upon a major buildup of its strategic forces some five years ago. Again, several distinct lines of thought may be identified with regard to the motivation behind this buildup and its linkage with the SALT talks.

One school has tended to see the buildup primarily in terms of a "catch-up" effort, oriented toward stabilizing the strategic balance at a level of parity with the United States. Some who favor this view come from the ranks of those once persuaded that the Soviet Union was content to live indefinitely with a status of strategic inferiority, counting upon a so-called "minimum deterrent" posture to maintain stability *vis-à-vis* the United States. Changing circumstances, these observers would argue, especially since the Cuban crisis of 1962, have led the Soviets to feel that stability must rest on strategic equality; any past stability based on US predominance was not only politically undesirable but strategically precarious, since the United States could always threaten to upset it.

Other adherents of the parity school proceed from different premises. Some, for example, see the situation as one in which the Soviet system has emerged as a postrevolutionary society whose communizing élan has run down, and whose leaders are therefore interested in stabilizing their strategic relationship with the United States via negotiations, so as to be free to concentrate on internal problems as well as on the problem of dealing with China. Still others believe that while the Soviet leadership may be in the "postrevolutionary" process of accommodating itself to the ongoing international order, its drive to even up the strategic balance reflects essentially a determination to share a global position of great power duopoly with the United States.

In contrast to those who believe, for one reason or another, that the Soviet leaders are agreed upon stabilizing the strategic balance at parity now that the Soviet Union has substantially caught up with its superpower rival in the West, a second school holds that the Kremlin leadership is not prepared to settle for a lasting strategic and political standoff with the United States. Rather, it is argued, the Soviet strategic buildup has been aimed all along at tipping the power balance in Soviet favor, in accordance with a long-term, well-integrated strategic plan. Besides putting more substance into familar Soviet rhetoric about the need for attaining superiority, the strategic buildup, according to this view, also is consonant with a coherent and unified Soviet military doctrine calling for a combination of offensive and defensive forces (including civil defense) adequate to insure Soviet survival and a victorious outcome in war, in the event that nuclear deterrence should fail. The political and military incentives which have helped to stimulate the Soviet strategic buildup are, in this view, fortified by the growth of anti-military and anti-arms-race trends in the United States; such trends are seen as a bonus factor upon which the Soviet Union will attempt to capitalize through the SALT talks and other means in order to make the most of an "historical opportunity" to gain a major strategic advantage over its principal Western adversary.

A third school of thought, to which this writer would subscribe, rests on the basic premise that the Soviet leaders probably embarked upon the strategic buildup without a fixed blueprint for the future and without having settled among themselves precisely what sort of strategic posture *vis-à-vis* the United States would prove satisfactory to Soviet policy needs during the next decade. Some segments of the leadership may have preferred to seek a stable and low-cost strategic relationship with the United States in order to channel more resources into domestic purposes; others perhaps favored parity pegged at a high level in order to keep third parties like Germany and China in their place and to sustain a duopoly of Soviet-American power in international politics; still others may have set their sights on attaining general strategic superiority over the United States in the belief that only thus could military and political freedom of action requisite to Soviet needs be assured.

Underlying these divergent strategic policy preferences were doubtless some significant differences of outlook within the Soviet leadership on such fundamental issues as the mutuality of Soviet-US interests. The more pragmatic elements among the leadership may have tended to recognize a growing range of mutual interests beyond avoidance of nuclear war, including the desirability of cultivating a stable Soviet-American relationship in order to contain the ambitions of Maoist China. On the other hand, within the top echelons of the leadership there were doubtless many men still dedicated to a cohesive doctrine of international "class struggle," leaving little room for common cause with the United States. Despite Soviet difficulties with China, leaders of the latter persuasion were probably not disposed to think in terms of permanent reconciliation of profound conflicts of interest with the United States.

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Although it seems likely, in this view, that no single strategic policy line enjoyed full endorsement, it is presumed that there was general agreement on a number of points in all Soviet leadership circles. For example, however burdensome the strategic buildup may have appeared, the leadership probably felt that it would open a range of political opportunities to the Soviet Union, important among these being the possibility of decoupling US strategic power from regional alliances, especially in Europe, where doubts about the future reliability of US commitments could impair NATO unity, lead to the isolation of West Germany, and leave the Soviet Union the main arbiter of European security. On the whole, the leadership also evidently shared the belief that the Soviet strategic buildup was needed to bolster deterrence, although there may have been considerable doubt in some minds about the feasibility of attaining a military posture adequate to wage nuclear war successfully if deterrence should fail. Another relatively noncontentious point, in all probability, was that Soviet policy should try to inhibit a new US takeoff in strategic technology and force levels as a response to the Soviet buildup. Finally, all elements of the leadership appear to have agreed that nothing less than Soviet-American strategic equality would be tolerable any longer.

This last proposition, one might suppose, was the pertinent factor which served to reconcile differing internal preferences with regard to strategic policy while the buildup gathered momentum during the last few years. So long as the immediate objective was to catch up with the United States, the political leadership could leave the details of catching up largely in the hands of the military-industrial bureaucracy and defer coming to grips with competing policy choices. However, whether one is prone to believe that the Soviet buildup grew out of a well-meshed strategic plan or a somewhat more haphazard series of developments, once it had brought the Soviet Union virtually abreast of the United States in strategic forces, the Kremlin leaders faced a new and potentially divisive question: Where do we go from here?

As previously noted, some observers would argue that the Soviet leaders had already answered this question to their satisfaction when they entered the SALT talks—either to halt the buildup at parity or to pursue it further in the hope of tilting the strategic balance in Soviet favor. However, if no consensus on alternative policy courses actually prevailed, then the Soviet attitude toward the talks themselves might be expected to reflect a certain ambivalence coupled with a conservative exploratory approach so as to keep the negotiations from aggravating internal policy differences. So far as one can judge from the available record, this appears to have been the case.

The Soviet Stance Toward SALT

First, it may be recalled, the initial Soviet decisions to enter the SALT talks, made public on June 27, 1968, came only after a delay of about 18 months, which in itself suggested that formulation of a Soviet position on strategic arms negotiations was a discordant issue within the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime.[18] The invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 prompted the American side in its turn to put off the talks, but within the Soviet Union signs of internal controversy over the strategic arms issue continued.

One form in which an ambivalent attitude toward the talks showed up was editorial tampering with official statements on arms control policy. For example, the military newspaper *Krasnaia zvezda* of October 4, 1968, in reporting Foreign Minister Gromyko's address to the UN the day before, deleted his remarks on strategic arms negotiations (though it mentioned other arms control proposals). Likewise, the Soviet press omitted reference to the same subject in a UN speech of November 13 by Iakov Malik, the Soviet UN representative. An anniversary speech on November 6, 1968, by Politburo member K. T. Mazurov also received press treatment differing from the live version, the effect of which was to censor out a statement expressing Soviet readiness to negotiate on "the whole complex" of questions involved in the strategic arms issue.

A second form in which contention over the Soviet Union's strategic policy and its stance

[18] President Johnson issued an invitation to the Soviet Union to enter into negotiations on the subject in his State of the Union message of Jan. 10, 1967. The Soviet government's readiness for "an exchange of opinions" was first announced during Foreign Minister Gromyko's speech to the Supreme Soviet on June 27, 1968, in which he said, among other things: "To the good-for-nothing theoreticians who try to tell us . . . that disarmament is an illusion, we reply: By taking such a stand you fall into step with the most dyed-in-the-wool imperialist reaction, weaken the front of struggle against it." Although he left unnamed those theoreticians whose advice he was rejecting, Gromyko was apparently attempting to rebut internal objectors to the strategic arms talks. *Pravda*, June 28, 1968. For further details on the original delay of 18 months in Soviet acceptance of American suggestions which led to the idea of the SALT talks, see the present author's *Soviet Power and Europe: 1945-1970*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1970, pp. 270, 273, 419.

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toward strategic arms talks with the United States seemed to manifest itself was the publication of a number of patently skeptical articles by military writers in late 1968 and 1969. Among other things, these articles voiced doubt about the utility of arms agreements to assure peace; they reiterated the familiar theme that Soviet military policy should aim at the attainment of superiority, and they cited Lenin's works to make the point that "imperialism" would continue to seek the military destruction of the Soviet Union until the worldwide triumph of communism.[19]

Another indication that enthusiasm for launching the SALT talks was by no means universal in Soviet leadership circles came after Kosygin had taken pains in mid-November 1968 to assure several American visitors, including former US Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara and Senators Claiborne Pell and Albert Gore, that the Soviet Union was eager for an early start on the talks. Shortly thereafter, Washington officials learned that Moscow was no longer pressing for negotiations,[20] which seemed to suggest that Kosygin's attitude was not shared by some of his peers. By early 1969, the Soviet leadership apparently resolved its internal debate on SALT to the point that a new offer to begin the talks was forthcoming,[21] though the conservative character of the consensus reached was indicated by the caveat that the USSR's interest in getting on with negotiations should not be "inferred" to be "greater than that of others." [22]

When the initial round of SALT talks finally took place in Helsinki (November 17-December 22, 1969), the Soviet Union's conference demeanor was notable for the absence of the polemics often associated in the past with Soviet participation in arms control conferences. Like the US delegation, spokesmen for the Soviet Union gave out guardedly optimistic statements at the close of the Helsinki session about the prospects for further discussion of strategic arms problems at Vienna,[23] but it seemed evident that neither side had exposed substantive negotiating positions. While this was consonant with the exploratory nature of the Helsinki talks, it also suggested that the internal complexities of working out a Soviet position remained unresolved, an impression strengthened by the contradictory manner in which Soviet media treated the subject of further negotiations in the four-month interval between Helsinki and the next round of talks at Vienna.

On the one hand, some commentaries made the point that neither side could realistically hope to gain advantage from a "new spiral in the arms race," indicated that the Soviet Union was not clinging to an "all-or-nothing" attitude, and saw merit in "partial measures" as a basis for restricting further strategic competition.[24] Such statements could be construed to mean that the Soviet Union was seriously interested in reaching an agreement at Vienna—or at least that Moscow did not want to prejudice the prospect of useful negotiations in advance.

On the other hand, spokesmen for the regime also resorted once more to polemical attacks on American sincerity and sought increasingly to influence the US domestic debate on arms policy.[25] Had the United States chosen to reply in kind, the result would hardly have been to improve the atmosphere for the next round of SALT. Without putting too fine a point on it, this perhaps was what some factions within the Soviet leadership may have been seeking. At least, the renewal of polemics against US arms programs, together with unabated deployment of Soviet missiles, could be taken to mean that some elements of the leadership

[19] For a sampling of such articles, see: Colonel E. Rybkin, "Critique of Bourgeois Conceptions of War and Peace," *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, September 1968, pp. 89-90; Lt. Col. V. Bondarenko, "The Contemporary Revolution in Military Affairs and the Combat Readiness of the Armed Forces," *ibid.*, December 1968, pp. 24-29; Major General K.S. Bochkarev, "V.I. Lenin and the Building of the Armed Forces of the USSR, *Morskoi sbornik*, February 1969, pp. 4-5; A. Galitsan, "For a Leninist Line," *Voennoistoricheskii zhurnal*, March 1969, pp. 12-13.

[20] See Bernard Gwertzman, "US Sees a Delay on Missile Talks," *New York Times*, Dec. 15, 1968.

[21] The offer was made at a press conference at the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jan. 20, 1969.

[22] Moscow Radio broadcast commentary, Jan. 21, 1969.

[23] TASS dispatch, "Preliminary Talks Ended", *Pravda*, Dec. 23, 1969; Gennadii Vasilev, "Positive Step," *ibid.*, Dec. 24, 1969. For comment by the head of the American delegation, see transcript of White House press conference of Ambassador Gerard C. Smith, Office of the White House Press Secretary, Dec. 29, 1969.

[24] See, for example, "Observer" article, "A Serious Problem," *Pravda*, March 7, 1970, and unsigned article, "Between Helsinki and Vienna," *USA:Economics, Politics, Ideology* (Moscow), January 1970, pp. 60-64.

[25] Soviet charges that the United States was trying to put obstacles in the way of the SALT talks began to appear in January 1970—after plans for expansion of the Safeguard ABM system were announced in Washington—and grew in intensity following the disclosure on March 10 that the United States would begin to equip a small number of Minuteman missiles with MIRV in mid-1970. See TASS broadcast of press conference by Leonid Zamiatin at the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Jan. 13, 1970; Lev Tolkunov, "America Today," *Izvestia*, March 14, 1970; V. Berezin, "Sticks in the Wheel," *Krasnaia zvezda*, March 14, 1970.

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in Moscow were more intent upon strengthening the Soviet Union's political and military positions than upon trying to reach an accommodation with the United States via the SALT talks.[26] In this connection, it was hardly surprising that a series of articles by top Soviet military leaders in early 1970 ignored the subject of SALT altogether, stressing rather, as Marshal Ivan Yakubovsky put it, that in the face of "international imperialism's aggressive plans . . . our party and people consider every possible strengthening of the country's defense capability their paramount task." [27]

No disclosure as to what kinds of proposals the Soviet Union might have brought to Vienna was forthcoming after the talks resumed behind closed doors on April 16. Except for an occasional reference to the utility of a "partial measures" approach, public Soviet commentary was confined largely to variations on a three-point theme sounded by Brezhnev on the eve of the Vienna round: (1) the Soviet Union would welcome "a reasonable agreement"; (2) it viewed the prospects for an agreement as "positive" only if the opposition of the US arms lobby was overcome by the American people; and (3) it would reply to any effort to gain military superiority over the Soviet Union by "making the necessary increase in our own military might." [28]

This Soviet line seemed to reflect an essentially conservative "hold and explore" formula that would tend to minimize any internal policy differences while allowing Moscow to mark time and see what the United States might propose at Vienna. Its first point could be expected to satisfy those interested in the possibility of agreements, either tacit or formal, which would validate strategic equality with the United States and permit stretching out military programs over longer periods to relieve pressure on Soviet resources. Its second point would appear to be congenial to the skeptics who had little expectation of reaching agreement, but who would be more than willing to pin any blame for torpedoing the talks on the American "military-industrial complex." Finally, its third point would go at least part way to placate the Soviet Union's own military leadership, in whose eyes the potential negative impact of SALT upon Soviet preparedness probably outweighed its positive aspects.

How much influence the Soviet marshals might be able to exert upon the strategic arms negotiations was not at all clear. No overt challenge to the party leadership's policy-making prerogatives, which are strongly embedded in Soviet tradition, could be discerned.[29] At the same time, however, Soviet leadership politics appeared to be passing through an especially delicate period, with widely-rumored maneuvering for position among the Kremlin's collective oligarchs in advance of the 24th CPSU Congress.[30] Given the balancing role of the military elite in past leadership crises, it might be assumed that the political leaders would think twice about espousing controversial SALT proposals at the risk of alienating military opinion. This need not imply that the Soviet marshals were in a position to call the tune at Vienna, but simply that the political leadership was more likely than not to avoid proposals that might seem to give away military advantage of one sort or another for the sake of improving the negotiating climate.

If the Soviet leaders were not disposed to adopt a negotiating position unpalatable to their military advisors, it seemed equally unlikely that they were prepared to back out of the talks altogether—for this would be a radical step in the other direction, running counter to such current aims of Soviet diplomacy as the fostering of detente in Europe and the easing of external pressures upon the Soviet

[26] Reports circulated briefly in the Western press during the first half of 1970 that the Soviet Union had suspended deployment of the SS-9, the largest ICBM in the Soviet arsenal, before the SALT talks began. However, according to a statement by US Secretary of Defense Laird on July 9, new starts on SS-9 launching sites, as well as SS-11 and SS-13 ICBMs, were continuing. The estimated rate of new Soviet deployments, according to other American officials, was about 100 ICBMs and 125 sea-based missiles annually. Soviet sources, characteristically, offered no information on the subject one way or the other. See George C. Wilson, "Laird Says Soviets Still Build SS-9s," *Washington Post*, July 10, 1970, and Hedrick Smith article, *New York Times*, July 25, 1970.

[27] "An Army of Revolution and an Army of People," *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, Feb. 22, 1970. See also articles by Marshal A.A. Grechko, "Born in Battles," *Pravda*, Feb. 23, 1970, and "Guarding Peace and Socialism," *Kommunist*, February 1970, pp. 62-63.

[28] Brezhnev speech of April 14, 1970, in Kharkov, *Pravda*, April 15, 1970.

[29] For previous treatment of this question, see the author's article, "Are the Generals Taking Over?" *Problems of Communism*, July-October 1969, pp. 106-10.

[30] The postponement of the 24th Party Congress to March 1971, announced only a few days after Brezhnev, on July 2, had said that it would be held this year, was one of many signs suggesting that political infighting was going on within the collective leadership. See *Pravda*, July 3 and 14, 1970. For discussion of earlier rumors of leadership ferment in 1970, see Mark Arnold, "Signs Point to a Big Shake-up in the Kremlin," *National Observer*, Washington, DC, April 20, 1970.

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economy. Kosygin's press conference statement on May 4, warning that the American action in Cambodia might adversely affect the SALT talks, appeared momentarily to hint at the possibility of a Soviet walkout;[31] however, if Moscow in fact considered such a move, second thoughts must have prevailed, for the strategic arms negotiations went ahead without interruption.

During the next couple of months, though both Moscow and Washington continued to observe official silence on the substance of the talks, Soviet propaganda against American strategic policy took no holiday. Its principal target was US Defense Secretary Melvin Laird, who was charged, among other things, with reviving the "myth of a Soviet threat" in order to justify new strategic weapons, and with trying to introduce "blackmail formulas" into the SALT talks.[32] In much the same vein, Mikhail Suslov, a leading Politburo member, reportedly told a delegation of Japanese Socialists on July 16 that Washington was seeking a treaty at Vienna that "would undermine Soviet power." However, he also indicated that there was "still some hope for a limited agreement."[33]

This, in brief, was the background against which, on July 24, the American side put forward the first specific package of measures tabled at Vienna, involving numerical limitations on strategic delivery systems and a low level of ABM defenses. Although details of the American proposal have not been published officially,[34] it was reported to offer a choice of overall quotas on ICBMs, submarine-launched missiles and strategic bombers, with each side allowed to vary the "mix" of strategic delivery vehicles within the agreed overall numbers, except that there would be a limitation on the permissible quantity of SS-9s or comparable large missiles. ABM defenses would be limited to less than 100 launchers, or possibly eliminated altogether. The numerical limitation measures would exclude a ban on MIRV testing and deployment, considered to require on-site inspection too intrusive for Soviet taste.[35]

Any expectation that the Soviet Union would promptly embrace the American proposal went unfulfilled during the remainder of the Vienna session, which came to a close on August 14 without any indication from the Russians whether they found the offer acceptable.[36] Nevertheless, American officials were reported to feel that there was a reasonable prospect, after further hard bargaining, of working out some sort of initial agreement on numerical ceilings for strategic weapons when the SALT talks entered their third round at Helsinki in November 1970.[37]

If such be the case, a significant branch-point in the Soviet-American strategic relationship will have been reached. On the one hand, agreement to place numerical ceilings on strategic systems could lead to stabilizing the strategic balance at some mutually acceptable level of parity; on the other hand, it could result in converting the strategic competition from a "numbers" race into a "quality" race.

No matter in which direction the SALT dialogue may point, however, the talks can hardly be expected to reverse the process by which the Soviet Union has gradually whittled away the strategic margin of its main Western adversary. One of the prime issues ahead, therefore, is whether the novelty of no longer laboring under a markedly unfavorable power balance may tempt the Soviet leaders to embark on more militant policies abroad.

The Future Soviet Course

Historically speaking, most students of Soviet affairs would probably agree that Soviet foreign policy behavior has reflected a combination of militancy and caution, with the latter more often evident;[39] there is less agreement, however, as to which attitude may predominate in the future. Some competent observers tend to doubt that Soviet

[31] See "Kosygin Conference Excerpts," *New York Times*, May 5, 1970.

[32] V. Matveev, "To End the Arms Race," *Za rubezhom*, June 1970, pp. 2-3; A. Zimin, "Washington Political Declarations and the Real Facts," *Mezhdunarodnaia zhizn*, July 1970, pp. 81-85.

[33] Suslov's remarks were reported on July 17, 1970, by a staff correspondent of the Japanese news agency *Kyodo*.

[34] For accounts describing the US proposals, see: Hedrick Smith, "US Offers Soviet Package Accord to Curb Missiles" and "US Makes Offer to Give Up ABMs If Soviet Does So," *New York Times*, July 25, Aug. 17, 1970; Chalmers M. Roberts, "Arms Talks: Progress and Prospects," *Washington Post*, Aug. 17, 1970.

[35] Reportedly, a MIRV ban was among the options put before Soviet negotiators earlier within the framework of a comprehensive rather than a limited agreement. See Hedrick Smith, in *New York Times*, July 25, 1970.

[36] The communique closing out the Vienna round noted that both sides had increased their "mutual understanding" of matters discussed, but the only point of agreement recorded was to resume the negotiations on Nov. 2, 1970, in Helsinki. See "Text of Communique," *New York Times*, Aug. 15, 1970.

[37] See Chalmers M. Roberts, "Standing SALT is Indicated," *Washington Post*, Aug. 15, 1970, and Hedrick Smith, *New York Times*, Aug. 17, 1970.

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risk-taking propensities will rise appreciably, holding that ingrained caution with respect to the risk of war will continue to govern the Kremlin's outlook, even though the power balance may look much more favorable to the Soviet Union than in the past. In this view, the desire to avoid dangerous confrontations, coupled with concern about the diversion of resources necessary to sustain a highly competitive military situation, would probably discourage risky probing against Western political positions. The need to mend fences in the West, while girding for possible conflict with China, is also deemed likely to temper militant anti-Western tendencies in Moscow.

As others see it, however, including this writer, it seems prudent to assume that the Soviet leadership may indeed come to accept greater risks in the process of trying to extract political gains from a changed strategic equation, thus introducing new elements of turbulence into international relations. In Europe, which in Soviet eyes still constitutes a focal arena of world politics, the strain on deterrence might increase considerably in a situation where preponderant Soviet conventional strength was no longer checkmated by superior American strategic power. Here the caution characteristically displayed by every generation of Soviet leaders toward the risk of military conflict in Europe might decline, possibly to the point where the Soviet Union would try to effect political changes by the threat of direct military pressure. Alternatively—and this seems the more likely possibility—the Soviet leaders might go no further than attempting to persuade Europeans that, in the absence of yesterday's American nuclear guarantee, they had best work out tomorrow's security arrangements along lines proposed by Moscow.

In trouble spots elsewhere—such as the Middle East and Mediterranean—where the presence of US and Soviet military power may tend to overlap, even a slight propensity in the Kremlin to press for political gains commensurate with the Soviet Union's stronger military posture could greatly aggravate existing instabilities. Moreover, a Soviet Union advertised as the strategic equal of the United States and possessing an improved capacity to influence local situations would probably find itself under new pressures to come to the help of clients abroad, where previously it was excused from becoming engaged because it obviously lacked the means to intervene.

None of this is to argue that the Soviet leaders would be likely to step so far out of character that they would court a direct confrontation with the United States. But the combination of a stronger military posture and the more vigorous assertion of the Soviet Union's global interests—together, perhaps, with the belief that domestic discord in the United States was seriously undermining American commitments abroad—might well raise the incidence of dangerous crisis situations in which the Soviet leaders, counting upon the other side to swallow diplomatic defeat, might blunder into actions with unhappy consequences.

It is by no means a foregone conclusion that a change in the power relationship of the Soviet Union and the United States will necessarily have deeply disturbing effects of the sort suggested above. Even though the strategic and technological environment may be such as to introduce many elements of uncertainty into the situation, it can be argued that uncertainty itself may contribute to mutual restraint and discourage the kind of political maneuver that might upset the deterrent balance. It can also be argued that the Soviet leadership has lost much of its revolutionary fervor, whatever lip service it may pay to the Marxist-Leninist verities, and that its own domestic difficulties are such as to minimize the pursuit of venturesome policies abroad. All of this suggests that the growth of Soviet military power and the shift it has produced in the power balance will have relatively little impact on the political conduct of the Soviet Union in the international arena.

Although one would prefer to conclude on this rather comforting note, perhaps a somewhat more somber prospect deserves the last word. The Soviet Union's internal economic problems and the apparently waning attraction of Marxist-Leninist ideology as a model both for the Soviet people and for the outside world happen to coincide with the Soviet Union's emergence, for the first time in its history, as a global military power. These congruent circumstances may well have the effect of persuading the Kremlin leadership to rely increasingly upon its growing military power for support of Soviet interests abroad and for extension of Soviet influence through classical modes of power politics. At the least, the asymmetry between the expansion of Soviet military power and the Soviet system's declining appeal as an example of modern societal growth and progress may tend to nudge the leadership in this direction. If so, the world may find that the problems of getting along with a Soviet Union dedicated to revolutionary Communist goals have been replaced by those of coping with a Soviet Union disposed to throw its weight around in furtherance of its great power interests.

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The Thought of Roger Garaudy

By Maurice Cranston

For many years Professor Roger Garaudy was celebrated in France as the Communist Party's leading philosopher. It was not simply that he was a philosopher who belonged to the French Communist Party (PCF); he was a man who had a large share in actually providing the party with its philosophy; at the level of abstract doctrine, he was its leading theorist and ideologue. When other professional philosophers such as Jean-Paul Sartre or Maurice Merleau-Ponty engaged in controversy with the PCF, it was Garaudy who was relied upon to speak for the party. And certainly no one else in the party could match either his knowledge of the history of philosophy or his mastery of its techniques. He was born in 1913, and although he teaches only in the provinces—as a professor of philosophy in the University of Poitiers—he has long been a man of established academic standing.

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In the spring of 1970, Garaudy was expelled from the PCF. Already in the early 1960's he had come to be regarded with growing suspicion by some French Communists, even though he remained a member of the party Politburo. Then, in August 1968, when the Soviet Union and four other Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechosolovakia, he openly and bitterly condemned the invasion. He had already greeted with enthusiasm the effort of the Dubcek regime in Czechoslovakia to "give socialism a human face." And now he did not even wait to learn the official party line on the invasion before he called for similar reforms elsewhere. But this time he went too far. At the PCF Congress at Nanterre in February 1970, Garaudy was treated with icy hostility. In the assembly hall, he was banished from the seats reserved for members of the Politburo. When he gave a speech—a very moderately-worded speech designed to disarm his critics—he was heard in utter silence, and not a single delegate clapped when he sat down. No one greeted him, not even his personal friends. It was obviously the end of his party career. A short while later his expulsion was formally decided.

Some journalists were surprised at the severity of the treatment meted out to Garaudy. Had not

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Louis Aragon, Picasso, and a number of other famous intellectuals in the party condemned the invasion of Czechoslovakia? Had not almost the entire Politburo of the Italian Communist Party also supported Dubcek? Why should Garaudy receive such singular punishment for what was not, after all, such a singular offense?

The answer may well lie not so much in Garaudy's politics as in his philosophy. For the last ten years and more, he has been developing ideas in ethics and metaphysics which, upon careful examination, could be seen to set him further and further apart from the established beliefs and orthodoxies of world communism. To be sure, ordinary, unreflective members of the PCF—and perhaps even some politically astute members of the Politburo—could hardly be expected to grasp the full implications of Garaudy's philosophical ideas. Such people often understand only simple political utterances at the level of day-to-day polemics, and for years Garaudy had dutifully repeated all the clichés of the party line: he attacked American and French "colonialism"; he talked about the historic mission of the working class; and he condemned fascist elements in the bourgeoisie. All this served to obscure the increasingly unorthodox nature of Garaudy's deepest thought.

But when, in 1968, he stopped echoing the party's clichés on political matters and started to utter heretical opinions at that level, the veil was removed. Garaudy could scarcely hope, let alone expect, to be regarded any longer as an official philosopher for the party. That many party members were angry with him is understandable. In a way, they were cross with themselves for having taken such a long time to wake up to what he was saying.

Nevertheless, as noted earlier, some French Communists had already become suspicious of Garaudy. As early as 1960, he had begun to take part in open discussions between Communists and Christians that differed noticeably from the previous exchanges of abuse between these old adversaries. The discussions, under Garaudy's leadership, took on the form of a friendly dialogue rather than of a heated debate. Garaudy proved himself more eager to exchange ideas than to impose his views on others; he was willing to learn, and he spoke of the conversations as a dialectical exercise which would result in an enrichment of Marxism itself. And what is most important is that he really meant it. Some sort of friendly rapport between Communists and Catholics was, to be sure, not wholly unheard of in the history of the PCF: during the Popular Front period of the 1930's, the then leader of the party, Maurice Thorez, made to progressive French Catholics the same overtures that he made to anti-fascist liberals; and again, after Hitler's attack on the Soviet Union in the 1940's, the French Communists sought to make common cause with Catholic resistance movements. But all these maneuvers and alliances were opportunistic and dictated by nothing other than the exigencies of the changing political situation. Garaudy's attitude in the 1960's was very different: he believed in the dialogues with existentialists and Christians as something of value in and for themselves.

Reports of these discussions were published in *Marxisme et Existentialisme* (Paris, Plon, 1962) and *L'Homme chrétien et L'Homme marxiste* (Paris, La Palatine, 1964), and they are of great interest. If few rank-and-file members of the French Communist Party read them at the time, one can be fairly certain that those who did were perplexed and faintly disturbed. For Garaudy emerges in these discussions as something far removed from a party spokesman, and his subsequent philosophical essays confirm that impression. *Marxism in the Twentieth Century*,[1] for example, is unmistakably the work of an original and independent thinker. It offers a devastating criticism of the kind of reasoning that is favored by the PCF, and which indeed underlies its most cherished and sacred positions.

What Garaudy sets out to do is to provide a restatement of Marxism which is at the same time faithful to Marx's own intentions and in keeping with the progress in knowledge that has taken place since Marx's time. That is to say, he seeks to formulate a Marxism at once purified and modernized. Since the word "revisionism" is historically associated with the efforts of Eduard Bernstein and Karl Kautsky to moderate Marx's revolutionary doctrine and hence is a pejorative term in Communist circles, Garaudy does not wish to be thought of as "revising" Marx. He sees himself, rather as offering a better understanding of what Marx meant

[1] *Marxisme au XX siècle*, Paris, La Palatine, 1966 & 1970; translated by René Hague as *Marxism in the Twentieth Century*, New York, Scribner's, and London, Collins, 1969. See also: Garaudy's *Marx*, Paris, Seghers, 1964: translated as *Karl Marx*, New York, International Publishers, 1967; *De L'Anathème au dialogue*, Paris, Plon, 1965: translated as *From Anathema to Dialogue*, New York, Herder and Herder, 1966; and *Qu'est-ce que la morale marxiste?*, Paris, Editions Sociales, 1963.

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and of the values Marx expressed. Nevertheless, the exercise he undertakes is extremely far-reaching. A good deal that has been generally regarded as essential to Marxism he treats as mere "dogma"; and dogma, says Garaudy, is something that Marxism must discard altogether if it is to "make way for thought."

In order to grasp the full force of remarks such as these, one needs to look back at Garaudy's earlier writings published during the lifetime of Stalin.[2] Although they are about philosophical and not political questions, they faithfully reproduce the type of dialectical materialism that Stalin expounded and imposed on his followers. No reader of these works would be surprised to learn that the author was awarded a Doctorate of Science by the Soviet Academy. Garaudy has not forgotten these writings—he has repudiated them. "For to accept uncritically Stalin's concepts in philosophy (as I did, for example, in my thesis on the materialist theory of knowledge)," Garaudy writes in a recent book, ". . . was more than an error in theory: approval of condemnations issued in the name of official dogmas facilitated . . . the task of those who prevented some particular person from writing, painting, or even living."[3]

Clearly it was Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin at the 20th Congress of the CPSU that awakened Garaudy from his own dogmatic slumbers. Garaudy himself pays tribute to Khrushchev for having "fundamentally challenged, in the eyes of the whole world, an image and method that have led a socialist regime" to commit "crimes against socialism," and for pointing out how "dogmatic theory" had been "used as an ideology to justify these crimes."[4]

Other Communists besides Garaudy were, of course, thrown into a state of intellectual turmoil by the repudiation of Stalin. But the standard response of the party member to the situation was simply to invoke the name of Lenin where he had once invoked that of Stalin, and to go on maintaining an unreflective adhesion to the party line. This was, of course, the response the party leaders wanted. Garaudy, however, had the conscience of a professional philosopher, and as he tells us, he felt a "gnawing need" to "assess his responsibilities" and to think out Marxism afresh.

Apparently he was never tempted to leave the party. He generally approved its political line, and even looking back at the course it had followed under Stalin's leadership, he felt that he had been right in supporting it because the struggle against fascism was so overwhelmingly important at the time that it was excusable to accept Stalinist policies for the sake of victory in that struggle. Nevertheless, Garaudy came to believe that Stalin's "*ad hoc* philosophy" was evil for two reasons: it had put a brake on thought and research, and it had bred a terrible persecution costing "millions of lives." Discipline had become an end in itself, replacing science in Communist thought; and dogmatism had produced an "inquisition."

Thus, Garaudy appeared to be carrying his repudiation of Stalin to greater lengths than other Communists, and a few of his comrades in the PCF were worried by the distinctions he was making—or not making—between politics and his own philosophy. To the extent that Garaudy, the philosopher, was volunteering to provide a non-Stalinist philosophy for people who had rejected Stalinism, his effort was more or less welcome to the party. There was, after all, a certain intellectual void to be filled in Communist minds, and a reformulated theory of knowledge, a modernized ontology, even a new esthetics could be quite acceptable. The trouble was, however, that Garaudy was thinking not simply about technical philosophy, but about philosophy as ideology, about philosophy as a theoretical program needed to justify party discipline. And in so doing, he was moving from the fairly harmless realm of the abstract into the dangerous zone of the concrete. For example, he was beginning to say that knowledge depended on free critical inquiry; and, from the way he put it, the obvious inference was that it required freedom in politics, too. So we can understand that other Communists were worried.

Nevertheless, Garaudy always wrote tactfully, even perhaps with a certain sly cunning. He continuously refers, even in his latest and most audacious writings, to Marx and Lenin—to Lenin in a particularly fulsome way—as if to reassure the reader that he is a loyal Marxist-Leninist despite the novelty of what he says. It will be remembered that both Marx and Lenin regarded themselves as champions of scientific socialism; that Marxist

[2] See, for example, the following works by Garaudy: *Théorie matérialiste de la connaissance*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1953; *Les origines francaises du socialisme*, Editions Hier et Aujourd'hui, 1949; and *Grammaire de la liberté*, Editions Sociales, 1950.
[3] *Marxism in the Twentieth Century*, p. 19.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

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philosophy has always boasted of its adherence to science as opposed to metaphysics. Garaudy accepts this terminology, but he argues that contemporary Marxists do not know what science is. His specific charge is that communism has gotten bogged down in an old-fashioned conception of science, that it understands science in terms of positivism. By positivism he means the view that science consists simply in the observation of facts and the induction of laws from the regularities discovered in nature. Garaudy detests positivism because it seeks to cut considerations of value out of science altogether. He insists that science is *not* simply the study of value-free facts, but on the contrary that science implies values.

In contrast to his unbridled hostility towards positivism, which he clearly regards as the great source of the corruption of Marxism, Garaudy is never aggressive in his discussions with existentialists and Christians. Let us, then, examine carefully the manner in which he has defended Marxism in these discussions, taking up his dialogue with the existentialists first. Garaudy has had a number of exchanges with Sartre which are interesting not only because of Sartre's eminence as a philosopher, but because of Sartre's own attitude toward Marxism. Sartre sees himself as effecting a marriage or synthesis of Marxism and existentialism. Garaudy regards Sartre's attempt as a failure, and he gives good reasons for doing so.

Sartre claims, at the beginning of his *Critique de la raison dialectique*, that Marxism is a much more substantial intellectual system than existentialism, and that his aim is to bring about a fusion of the "major," Marxist philosophy with the "minor," existentialist ideology. He further promises that once this fusion is completed, existentialism will fade away. Garaudy, on the other hand, argues that Sartre has not really accepted any central notion of Marx and has simply put forward, in a new guise, the same theory of human relations that he advanced thirty years ago in *Being and Nothingness*. Sartre, says Garaudy, remains a Sartrian—committed to the old doctrine that "hell is other people," that "love is impossible," and that "all relations between men are relations of conflict."

These criticisms of Sartre are developed in a very adroit and professional way. But the most striking thing about them is that they do not contain any attempt to defend the traditional Marxist notions that Sartre attacks. Garaudy is more concerned to defend a humanitarian ethics against Sartre's misanthropy; he wants to show that love *is* possible. Secondly, Garaudy seems virtually to take over from Sartre the project of reconciling existentialism with Marxism, apparently with the aim of producing a better synthesis of the two than Sartre's.

Marxist attacks on existentialism are familiar, for even the most "advanced" Marxist thinkers, such as Georg Lukacs, find something especially repellent in the existentialist doctrines of free will and the total solitude of the individual. Garaudy's criticisms of existentialism, however, reveal a sympathetic understanding of the subject that stands in sharp contrast to this conventional antagonism. He puts forward the unexpected suggestion that modern existentialism derives historically not only from Kierkegaard, but also from Fichte; and he further argues that Fichte goes the modern existentialists one better in that he keeps their key ideas within a framework of rationalist philosophy. Indeed, Garaudy takes Fichte as his own model in seeking to recover what is valuable in existentialism and uniting it with Marxism. All this is unexpected because Fichte is not a name often quoted with respect in Marxist circles, for the sound reason that he was a philosophical idealist who built his system on the possibility of a speculative knowledge of Absolute Mind, or God.

The name of Fichte *is* important to Garaudy, however, because one of the main themes of the latter's whole argument is that Marxism, far from belonging to the tradition of positivistic, mechanistic materialism, derives instead from the tradition of German idealism. Thus, for Garaudy, Fichte is one of the intellectual ancestors not only of existentialism, but also of Marxism; and hence the key place Fichte occupies in Garaudy's enterprise of bringing modern existentialism and modern Marxism together.

Garaudy's rejection of positivism leads him to an equally spirited rejection of that school of philosophy which is perhaps most dear to the French Left: namely, the philosophy of the 18th-century French Enlightenment represented by Voltaire, Diderot, d'Alembert, d'Holbach, and Condillac. These men are no heroes for Garaudy. He sees them as the forerunners of positivism. Instead, his guiding lights are the German idealist philosophers who reacted against the Enlightenment: Kant, Hegel, Fichte, Schelling, Feuerbach; and he claims that

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it is only in relation to these men's works that Marx can be correctly understood. This suggestion is all the more interesting in that Garaudy himself, in his early Stalinist days, stressed the *French* origins of socialist thought—and indeed wrote a book on just that subject.

Garaudy argues that Fichte was a precursor of existentialism because he denied that essence has primacy over existence; and Garaudy claims that Fichte was the first philosopher to do so. He quotes Fichte to the effect that "man is nothing other than what his free activity makes him" and that "every man makes himself what he is." But Garaudy goes on to say that Fichte imparted to this "first principle of existentialism" both a rational and a social dimension. It remained for Kierkegaard, Garaudy claims, to forsake the rational dimension, and for Sartre to forsake the social dimension. "Today," writes Garaudy, "we have to try to win back what is lost."

In other words, Garaudy has set himself the goal of going back to what he calls Fichte's "existentialism" and purging it of the accretions of Kierkegaard and Sartre. Thus he is committed not only to upholding Marxism, but also to upholding what he considers the central Fichtean core of existentialism. It would be paradoxical, indeed, if the result of the dialogue between Sartre and Garaudy turned out to be that Sartre, proclaiming himself a convert to Marxism, remained faithful to existentialism, while Garaudy, protesting his continued adherence to Marxism, was won over to existentialism.

Garaudy's acceptance of existentialism, however, could not be considered more than partial. "Existentialism," he writes, "has raised a real problem, and we must answer it by working out more pro-

A French Way to Socialism

We cannot accept the view that there exists somewhere a single ideal model [of socialism] which we need only apply to our own country. Twice in the last twenty years, in 1948 with the excommunication of Yugoslavia and in 1968 with the intervention in Czechoslovakia, we have witnessed the mischief caused by the concept of a single model. . . . Our party, which allowed itself to be led blindly in 1948, has in 1968 protested, with just cause, the military intervention in Czechoslovakia. Why, after we have condemned the intervention, would it be criminal for us to ask ourselves what were its profound causes, to analyze the political and theoretical principles which underlie it—that is to say, the refusal, in fact if not in words, to recognize the legitimacy of the search for new forms of socialism adapted to the national traditions and the level of development of each country? When I have insisted on several occasions upon the necessity of assuring the French people unequivocally that the kind of socialism we seek to install in France is not the kind of socialism that is today being imposed militarily upon Czechoslovakia, it is precisely in order to remove this concern which weighs heavily upon our relations with the non-Communist Left because it perpetuates uncertainty as to what might be the future of a socialist France. . . .

If today I have asked to be heard, it is because . . . I consider it a duty, whatever the circumstances, to pose the problems that I believe are vital to the future of our country. . . . At a stage in the history of our party which is no longer one of clandestinity and enforced secrecy, and at a moment in the history of our people when the working class itself is becoming more and more the nation, the problems of our party are the problems of the nation as a whole. . . . These problems cannot be discussed behind closed doors but must be discussed before all our people, with the participation and rich contribution of those who, without being members of our party, honestly want socialism. I therefore reject the thesis that any effort to initiate open discussion and political inquiry is to be considered a call for factionalism. . . . What is most harmful to our party is precisely to refuse to discuss in the full light of day the issues that are most controversial and the most debated among the French people, for such discussion alone can permit the mobilization of the masses for an active participation in the formulation of the policy of our party if that policy is one day to become that of France.

—From the speech of Roger Garaudy at the 19th Congress of the PCF, as reported in *Le Monde* (Paris), Feb. 7, 1970.

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foundly the Marxist theory of subjectivity." In this sense, Garaudy remains a Marxist. And the point at which he distinguishes Marxism from existentialism is in suggesting that Marxism makes the experience of "We" the beginning of man's consciousness, while the existentialist regards the primary experience as that of "I". He goes on to say:

I am conscious of this "I" only through the presence of others in me. This presence shows itself in the language in which I speak of myself and in the work through which I go beyond myself. Work, as the going beyond being, is the first moral category.[5]

This word "work" is, of course, a Marxist one; and whenever Garaudy uses it, he reminds us that he is a Marxist. But quite often he uses other words such as "action" and "creation," which do not have the same Marxist overtones, although they seem to serve much the same purpose in his argument. In any event, the important aspect of Garaudy's theory of subjectivity is that he uses it to banish individualism in the existentialist sense, but at the same time to preserve the concept of the individual. Although the "We" comes before the "I," the "I" is still there; it emerges from the experience of "We"—*i.e.*, from "contrasting myself with other people," as Garaudy puts it. And once it has emerged, the "I" is just as real as the "We." Man is both a social *and* an individual animal.

Garaudy takes a similar approach to the problem of free will. Conventional Marxists regard freedom of the will as an illusion: men's decisions, they believe, are governed by historical necessity, which in turn is governed by the economic infrastructure of the society. Sartrian existentialists, on the other hand, proclaim man's absolute freedom and responsibility as a choosing being. Garaudy proposes a solution halfway between these extremes. He agrees with Sartre that man is a choosing being, but he adds that man does not make a choice between *any* given terms—he has to choose between possibles. In other words, Garaudy asserts the reality of human choice, but he insists that it is a limited choice. In this he has, perhaps, the merit of being closer than either Marx or Sartre to common sense.

Garaudy's dialogues with Christians have in some ways been even more remarkable than his dialogues with existentialists. For Sartre, after all, is a man of the Left: politically, he is divided from the Communist Party only in the sense of holding more extreme revolutionary opinions. But the Catholics with whom Garaudy has exchanged ideas belong to an institution which historically has been the enemy of the Communist Party for political no less than for philosophical reasons. Even so, Garaudy has sought a common ground with Catholics —and he claims to have found one. In his book *From Anathema to Dialogue* (1966), Garaudy says that "the common humanistic concern of both Christianity and Marxism" affords "a basis for cooperation." He also describes what he considers essential to the success of this collaboration:

. . . the decisive precondition for such a profound dialogue and collaboration is to seek, each for himself, to draw out what is fundamental from what gives meaning and value to his life—from Christianity for some, from Marxism for others—and, after having eliminated the accidental and the contingent, to determine whether, at this fundamental level, there are sufficient areas of congruence to permit us, working together and without mental reservations, to construct the common city and future of a mankind deprived of none of his dimensions —of the "total" man of Marx and the "entire" man of Father Teilhard.[6]

In short, what Garaudy was proposing to his Christian friends was that both Marxists and Christians should set about distinguishing what was basic, essential, or fundamental in their respective philosophies from everything that was inessential. For the Christian, he suggested that this would mean getting rid of mythology; for the Marxist, it would mean getting rid of positivism and dogmas. What is basic to Marxism, Garaudy argued, is the belief that knowledge is active, that man creates his own history through work, and that the role of philosophy is the transformation of the world. As for Christianity, he suggested that basically it is a "religion of action" seeking the salvation of man not just in eternity but also in the present world. "Hence," he continued, "Christianity does not rule out, but actually implies, militant effort turned towards the future and its construction." In these terms, Marxism and Christianity are brought onto common ground.

In Garaudy's view, the old quarrel between religion and science, so virulent in the 19th century, was a quarrel based on a mistake—on a misconception of both religion and science. Religion does

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[6] Translated from the French edition, pp. 30-31.

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not have to be other-worldly, he argued, and science is certainly not correctly understood in the light of positivist theories about its purely empirical content. Garaudy went even further and suggested that the characteristic hostility of French Communists to religion was a prejudice that had lingered on from the anti-clerical ideology of 19th-century French republicanism, and that this in turn derived from the reactionary political attitudes of the Catholic Church in the past. But he suggested that the Church had changed, and that these past political attitudes were no longer relevant. Besides, it was the reality—the true essential core of Christianity—that mattered; and between the Christian ideal of redeeming mankind and the Marxist ideal of ending man's alienation, Garaudy could see no cause for conflict. It was not that Garaudy tried to cover up the differences between Marxism and Christianity. Indeed, he restated them—as he understood them—towards the end of his book *From Anathema to Dialogue*:

Marxism asks itself the same questions as does the Christian; it is beset by the same need; it lives under the same tension with respect to the future. But, to be precise, Marxism—because it is a critical and not a dogmatic philosophy—does not consider itself entitled to transform question into answer, need into presence. . . . My thirst does not prove the existence of the spring. For the Marxist, the infinite is an absence and a need; for the Christian, it is a promise and a presence. . . . For a Christian, transcendance is the act of God, who comes toward and summons him. For a Marxist, it is a dimension of the act of man, who reaches beyond himself toward his far-off being.[7]

Garaudy felt that the Communist-Catholic dialogue had to some extent been authorized on the Catholic side by the encyclical of Pope John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*. What he could not produce was any corresponding "authorization" on the Communist side, and he plainly did not realize in the early 1960's how little approval he had from his own party. Of course, he told the Christians with whom he held public discussions that he was speaking only as an individual, but he was soon to learn how little liberty a member of the French Communist Party's apparatus has to "speak as an individual." And the more original and interesting Garaudy's remarks became, the more he placed himself in jeopardy.

One of the most explosive of Garaudy's writings is the chapter of his *Marxism in the Twentieth Century* entitled "From Dogmatism to Thought." The very title is significant because it carries the plain implication that dogmatism is antithetical to thought. From this it follows that the more Garaudy indicts Communists for entertaining dogmas, and the more he attacks dogmatism, the further he puts himself at odds with his party. Garaudy defines dogmatism as "the illusion of pronouncing the absolute and definitive truth about things." Positivistic materialism is dogmatic, he asserts, but Marxism—as he conceives it—is not, because it is based on the critical method:

Dialectical materialism is conscious of the fact that the real is inexhaustible, is irreducible to the knowledge we have of it, and that every scientific concept is always a provisional construction, pending the appearance of richer, more effective, and truer constructions (p. 42).

Garaudy goes on to say:

To confer on Marxism the prerogative of an "absolutely absolute" truth . . . to allow it to be free from the vicissitudes of scientific progress would be to rob it of its character as a science and give it the immutability of dogma. . . . Marxism cannot at the same time class itself as a science and claim the status of a truth that could only be absolute, the (illusory) status of metaphysics and theology (p. 44).

In sum, Garaudy's Marxism is—as he puts it—the "opposite of dogmatism," because it recognizes "the necessity for a plurality of scientific hypotheses," and because it is committed to the experimental method. This experimental method, in turn, he links to practice, for man, in order to have knowledge and understanding of things, must "go out and meet them"—he must construct models and then verify their correctness in practice.

Some readers may feel that all this is closer to Kant than to Marx. But Garaudy would protest that Marx himself is to be understood in terms of Kant—as the exponent of another type of critical rationalism. The big difference is that Marx had an image of man unknown to Kant—that is, an image of man alienated from the creations of his own labor as a result of the class structure of society. Garaudy makes great effort to stress his own attachment to the Marxist notion of class. Nevertheless, in his conception of Marxism, the moral categories are more conspicuous than the economic ones. Sometimes one feels that Garaudy looks at Marx and sees Kant.

In his book *Karl Marx* (1963), Garaudy wrote:

The true "Copernican revolution" in philosophy was effected far more by Marx than by Kant. In placing man

[7] Translated from the French edition, pp. 86-87.

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and his struggles at the center of the world rather than regarding man as an abstract "subject," Marxism became an active force—a weapon in the hands of some, a menace in the eyes of others. It has molded, developed, and sharpened itself in constant, intense polemics. . . . At this stage of thought, Marxism is vibrant with fresh activity. (p. 12).

At the time he wrote these words, the atmosphere of "thaw" was in the air. The Communist regimes in Eastern Europe were lifting various restrictions and easing the pressure on intellectuals. Garaudy naturally hoped that this new attitude had come to stay. Alas, as the whole world knows, the hatches were screwed down again towards the end of the 1960's. Garaudy protested. The new freeze, he said, was a denial of Marxism. But his protests only made party sanctions against him inevitable.

He could, and did, plead his own fidelity to Marx and Lenin. He vigorously defended the "orthodox" nature of his own reading of Marx. He attacked the "revisionists" and affirmed that he was not one of them. But protests of this kind have never helped any Communist in conflict with his party apparatus, and they did not help Garaudy.

No one who reads Garaudy's interpretations of Marx can fail to be impressed by his scholarship. Nor can one fail to be equally struck by the extent to which his thinking has diverged from Soviet orthodoxy. He lauds the frank avowal of error made at the 20th Congress of the CPSU, but he gives no indication of believing that the Soviet Union has discovered any new truths since it abandoned its earlier, Stalinist dogmas. Indeed, he implies that given the state of philosophy in the Soviet Union, it would be almost too much to expect such thinking to take place there.

Altogether, Garaudy is making a bigger demand than he seems willing to admit. For if he is right, Marxism must cease to be an ideology and become a critical philosophy; and as such it would cease to provide clear theoretical guidelines for the general public—indeed, it would cease to a large extent to offer any clear-cut answers to the more important questions that it raises. It would simply summon people to further enquiry; it would cease to provide the basis for official pronouncements, much less a justification for enforcing one line in preference to others. It would, in short, entail a reign of complete intellectual freedom.

Hence, if Marxism were to become Garaudy's brand of Marxism, it would no longer be of use to any authoritarian regime such as the Communist parties maintain in Eastern Europe and elsewhere. It could not possibly serve as a "state philosophy." Indeed, if Garaudy's philosophy were adopted, it would undermine any authoritarian regime. For all these reasons, the French Communist Party's condemnation of Garaudy's writings, and of Garaudy himself, is in no way illogical.

There remain, however, two unanswered questions. First, is Garaudy's interpretation of Marx's thought closer to the real Marx than other, more conventional readings? Second, is Garaudy's theory —whether Marxist or not—true?

Both these questions require a context of freedom in which they can be considered. In the Communist world, neither can even be asked, because established authority has already given the answers: Garaudy is a heretic, and his theory is false. In the Western world, both questions can be considered, but from Garaudy's point of view such a discussion is of limited value. For what he wanted to do was not to add one more interpretation of Marx to the dozens that are already in circulation in the Western world, but to bring about a transformation of Marxist thought where that transformation would really change men's lives. This is part of what he means in insisting on the unity of theory and practice and his belief that "philosophy is action."

For Roger Garaudy himself, the truly melancholy aspect of his expulsion from the Communist Party apparatus was not so much the personal blow and humiliation as it was the knowledge that he had been cut off from the one audience he wished most to influence, and to convert—as he put it—from "dogma to thought." Now he will be read only by people who are already free.

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Soviet Technology: System *vs.* Progress

By Gertrude E. Schroeder

In the past several years, the Soviet regime has focused major attention on the task of accelerating technological progress, even to the extent of making the rate of technological advance the touchstone of the nation's success in its ongoing contest with capitalism. Technological progress has become a major theme in the Soviet press, and numerous government decrees and regulations have been aimed at increasing the rate of introduction of new technologies and products. As will be seen, however, the payoff from this ambitious campaign has thus far been minimal.

General Secretary Brezhnev himself posed the challenge the Soviet Union must meet in the technological field in an address to the International Conference of Communist and Workers' Parties held in Moscow in June 1969, and he admitted then that "the struggle . . . will be protracted and difficult."[1] He reiterated the challenge nearly a year later when, invoking the authority of Lenin, he said: "The fundamental question now is not how much you produce, but at what cost. . . . It is in this field that the center of gravity in the competition between the two systems lies in our time."[2] A Soviet journalist has put the matter even more graphically: "The campaign to accelerate technical progress has no less significance in our time than the struggle for industrialization in the years of the early five-year plans."[3]

Meanwhile, in an orgy of self-flagellation apparently intended to impress upon all the magnitude of the task at hand, the Soviet press has cited numerous examples of Soviet industry's technological backwardness relative to Western industry. The drive to eliminate this embarrassing gap has generated dramatic slogans about a technological race with capitalism, but the campaign is also closely tied to Soviet efforts to increase economic efficiency.

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[1] *Pravda*, June 6, 1969.
[2] *Ibid.*, April 14, 1970.
[3] *Trud*, March 5, 1969.

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Technological "Tailing"

In the past decade the national economy of our country has begun to show threatening signs of dislocation and stagnation. . . . The growth rate in national income has been going inexorably down. A rift has opened up between what is necessary for normal development and the real introduction of new production capacities. . . . Defects in the system of planning, accounting and incentives often lead to a contradiction between local or bureaucratic and state or national interest. The result is that reserves are not available and used for production research as they should be, and technological progress is severely retarded. . . . In our country labor productivity continues, as before, to be many times lower than in capitalist countries, and its growth rate is sharply declining. . . .

When we compare our economy with that of the United States, we see that ours is lagging behind, not only quantitatively, but—and this is the saddest part— also qualitatively. The more novel and revolutionary the aspect of the economy, the wider becomes the gap. . . . We are ahead of the US in the production of coal but behind in the production of oil, gas, and electric power, ten times behind in chemistry, and immeasurably behind in computer technology. The latter is especially essential, for the introduction of electronic computers into the national economy is of decisive importance and could radically change the face of the system of production and culture in general. This phenomenon has rightly been called the "second industrial revolution." Meanwhile, the total capacity of our pool of computers is hundreds of times less than in the USA, and as for the use of electronic computers in the national economy, here the difference is so enormous that it is impossible to measure. We are simply living in a different era. . . .

In the late 1950's, our country was the first to launch a sputnik and to send a man into space. By the end of the 1960's, we have lost the lead in this field (as in many others). The first men to set foot on the moon were Americans. This is one of the outward signs of an essential and ever-growing gap between our country and the West extending through the whole spectrum of scientific technological activity.

—From the Appeal of scientists A. D. Sakharov, V. F. Turchin and R. A. Medvedev to Soviet party and government leaders, March 19, 1970. Translated in *Survey* (London), Summer 1970, pp. 160–70.

The Soviets fully recognize that accelerated technological progress is essential if the rate of USSR economic growth is to be boosted above the level of the past decade—or, indeed, if the recent decline in the rate of growth is to be halted. As *extensive* means of accelerating growth—*i.e.*, increases in the rate of investment and the rate of labor-force participation—near exhaustion, *intensive* sources of growth—improved technology and management—assume new importance. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Soviet leadership has launched a frontal attack on what it believes to be the root causes of the failure of the Soviet economic system to generate more rapid technological advance. This shortcoming was evidently a major theme at the Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee in December 1969, as well as a key point in a (still unpublished) followup letter to party, government, trade union and Komsomol organizations "concerning improvement of the use of production reserves and strengthening economic discipline."[4] This letter, which in effect introduced the most recent and most energetic campaign for economic efficiency, reportedly bore the joint imprimatur of the party Central Committee, the Council of Ministers, the All-Union Council of Trade Unions, and the Central Committee of the Komsomol.

Dimensions of the Gap

The Soviet aim of overtaking and surpassing the Western industrialized countries in the level of industrial technology is far more ambitious even than Khrushchev's vain goal of catching up with the United States in industrial output by 1970. For while nobody has yet devised any exact method of measuring international differences in levels of technology *per se*, a variety of evidence indicates that the USSR trails quite far behind the West in this area. Generalizing on the basis of a number of indicators, Michael Boretsky concluded that Soviet industrial technology in 1962 lagged behind that of the US by some 25 years on average; in some areas the lag was as much as 40 years, while in a few it was only 5-7 years.[5]

[4] *Partiinaia zhizn*, No. 6, 1970, p. 3. This is one of many references to the letter, but in all the discussion, the text has, inexplicably, never been published.

[5] Michael Boretsky in *New Directions in the Soviet Economy*, Joint Economic Committee, U.S. Congress, Washington, D.C., 1966, Part II A, p. 149.

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The size of the existing "productivity gap" between the Soviet Union and the West is another indicator of the gap in technology. According to the estimates of Abram Bergson, the overall productivity of the Soviet economy in 1960, as measured by output per unit of labor and capital input, was 28 percent of the US level when measured in Soviet domestic prices and 45 percent when measured in dollars; and for the non-agricultural sector alone, the respective levels were found to be 32 percent and 55 percent.[6] Bergson's study showed that a sizable overall productivity lag also existed in 1960 between the USSR and Northwest Europe. The Soviet position relative to the industrial West may have deteriorated over the past decade, moreover, inasmuch as productivity growth has slowed markedly in the USSR during that time, whereas it has speeded up in the US and remained high in Western Europe and Japan. Studies by Soviet statisticians of the relative levels of industrial labor productivity in the US and the USSR reveal a considerable gap in that area as well.[7] Of course, differences in the levels of technology used in production are not the sole explanation of productivity differences, but technology is necessarily a large factor.

There are still other evidences of the Soviet lag in technology. Machinery, the most technologically intensive branch of industry, makes up over 30 percent of Soviet imports from the industrial West, but only 2-3 percent of total USSR exports to these countries. This considerable imbalance has not diminished significantly over the past decade, suggesting that Soviet machinery-manufacturing technology has not improved relative to that of the West. Turning to specific industrial technologies, only about one-tenth of total steel output in the USSR was made by the oxygen-converter process in 1968, compared with nearly three-fourths in Japan, one-fourth in Western Europe, and nearly three-fifths in the US. Soviet-produced computers are still second-generation, transistor machines, whereas the US and Western Europe are now producing third-generation computers using integrated circuitry. The USSR also has yet to complete an ammonia plant employing the new cost-reducing technology that has revolutionized such production in the West.

The Soviet technological lag cannot be attributed to any failure to allocate resources either to research and development or to education. On the contrary, the government has long invested large amounts in these sectors. The USSR currently devotes almost as large a share of its national product and its labor force to research and development as does the US,[8] while Western Europe lags far behind in this regard. At the same time, the percentage of college graduates in the Soviet labor force—most of them with technical training—has risen rapidly in the past two decades and now far exceeds the corresponding percentage in Western Europe, although it is still well below the US figure. Finally, the USSR not only maintains an extensive system for acquiring foreign scientific and technical information, but also has imported large quantities of industrial plant and equipment from the West, such imports totalling over $4 billion from 1955 to 1968.

The prime cause of the Soviet Union's relative technological backwardness appears to lie in the procedures whereby new technologies are introduced and disseminated. The centrally administered Soviet economy has no spontaneous mechanism that operates automatically to spur technological progress in the way that profit-seeking competition does, however imperfectly, in the market economies of the West. Instead of stimulants, automatic deterrents to innovative activities have become embedded in the very warp and woof of the Soviet system. The principal deterrents are to be found in the bureaucratic machinery which attempts to administer the innovative process and in the ill-conceived system of incentives which purports to foster innovative decisions.

Innovation by Administration

New production technologies and new products are "introduced" into the economy by deliberate actions of administrative bodies, and obsolete tech-

[6] Abram Bergson, *Planning and Productivity Under Soviet Socialism*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1968, pp. 22, 49.

[7] Official Soviet statistics claim that output per production worker in Soviet industry was 40-50 percent of the U.S. level in 1963: *Narodnoe khoziaistvo SSSR v 1963 godu*, Moscow, 1964, p. 69. A careful study by a Soviet economist, however, finds the relative level in that year to be 33.6 percent or 36.8 percent, depending on the weights used. Among the 11 branches of industry investigated, the relative levels ranged from 12.0-16.1 percent in fuels to 55.7-56 percent in ferrous metallurgy: M. Kudrov, *Vestnik Moskovskovo Universiteta, Seriia VII—Ekonomika*, No. 1, 1969, pp. 10-21. For a Western comparison yielding similar results, see: Gertrude E. Schroeder in *Dimensions of Soviet Economic Power*, U.S. Congress, Joint Economic Committee, Washington, D.C., 1962, pp. 139-162. Interestingly, the latter was carried out in physical terms, whereas the former both were made in value terms.

[8] OECD, *Science Policy in the USSR*, Paris, 1969, p. 385.

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nologies and old products must be taken out of use or production in the same way. This complex process has to be carried out separately in each individual enterprise by means of specific plans for adopting new technology and producing new products. In turn, the materials and equipment required to accomplish these two key parts of one given enterprise's plans must be explicitly incorporated into the production plans of other enterprises. The whole process must be coordinated at higher echelons—at the top by the State Committee for Science and Technology and the State Planning Committee, and at intermediate levels by the numerous industrial ministries and supply agencies. Assorted other government bodies also get involved at various steps along the way.

As things now stand, the process of coordination functions poorly, and the various elements remain insulated from each other. For one thing, because it operates in a vacuum, as far as true costs and realistic prices are concerned, the vast bureaucracy engaged in "planning" technological progress has lacked a satisfactory means of determining the "payoff" of innovation—*i.e.*, of deciding whether the cost of a given modification of production processes will be repaid in increased productivity. (The regime's attempt in September 1969 to improve the "coefficients" used in such calculations will be discussed later on.) For another, the ultimate customers of new technologies and products have traditionally had little opportunity to influence the producers of new machinery and equipment. Innovations have been planned and developed for the most part by a hefty and burgeoning research establishment which operates in isolation from the industrial enterprises.

This cumbersome administrative process itself tends to operate as a brake on technological innovation. But even more serious are the obstacles to the exercise of initiative by individual enterprise managers, who were supposed to be an important cog in the mechanism of innovation under the economic reform. Decisions to install new machinery and processes are entangled in a maze of technical regulations and directives from above. The system of taut planning throughout the economy also discourages managerial initiative by providing few reserves of supplies or plant capacity to handle the bottlenecks and inevitable disruptions which attend technological change in any economy.

Finally, perhaps the greatest deterrent of all has been the system of incentives, which was intended to spur innovative activity by enterprise managers, but instead causes them to cling to the traditional emphasis on meeting assigned production targets at the expense of technological experimentation. Managerial bonuses—though no longer based mainly on the volume of physical output, as was the case prior to the economic reform of 1965—are now determined on the basis of planned sales and profits and on production of the "most important products." The result is that enterprise managers try to avoid introducing new technology and new products because these threaten to interrupt production and reduce profits, thereby decreasing bonuses.

Soviet planners apparently believe that the solutions to the problems of lagging technological progress are to be sought in three main policy areas. First, investment priorities must be structured so as to favor the more technologically advanced sectors, *e.g.*, light metals in preference to steel, oil and gas in preference to coal. Specific proposals are being widely discussed, and presumably new long-range plans are being oriented accordingly.[9]

Second, remedies must be found for the chronic problems of the construction industry, which have caused delays in the activation of new capacities and the modernization of old plants. As one writer put it, "We design new enterprises in two or three years, we build them in five to seven years, and then we take one to two years to get them producing. . . . This shows how inefficiently we are using new technology and how we are slowing technical progress."[10] Here, the regime has sought to rely largely on such hackneyed administrative remedies as the creation of a series of specialized construction ministries, steps to limit the number of new construction projects that can be started in a given year, and the mounting of crash campaigns to complete a specified list of priority projects. Such remedies, however, were tried unsuccessfully in the past and apparently remain equally ineffective in the present, as evidenced by the continuing year-to-year rise in the volume of unfinished construction and by recurrent complaints in the press about the "scattering of resources" over numerous projects. More recently, there has been an incipient effort, apart from the measures just mentioned, to extend the ongoing general economic reform to construction enterprises under a government instruction issued in October 1969.[11] This effort, however, is proceeding at snail's pace, and its impact still remains to be seen.

[9] *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 1, 1970, pp. 72-83.
[10] *Nauchno-tekhnicheskie obshchestva SSSR*, No. 9, 1969, p. 4.
[11] *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, No. 46, 1969, pp. 9-16.

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Tackling Institutional Obstacles

In both of these first two policy areas—*i.e.*, those involving the readjustment of investment priorities and the stepping-up of new plant construction and modernization—it can be seen that the regime's approach has been to attack the symptoms rather than the primary causes of the ailments it desires to correct. This is perhaps less immediately obvious but nonetheless also true of the leadership's approach in the third area of policy, which involves a widespread attack on the many obstacles that have long inhibited innovation throughout the industrial bureaucracy, but especially at the enterprise level. Here again, the essential line of approach is to identify and define some specific form of bad behavior and to prescribe actions or incentives designed to cure it, or alternatively to define the correct behavior and steps to foster it. Thus, as will emerge more clearly in the rest of this discussion, which will focus particularly on this third area, it is the surface symptoms that are dealt with, while the underlying causes are left untouched.

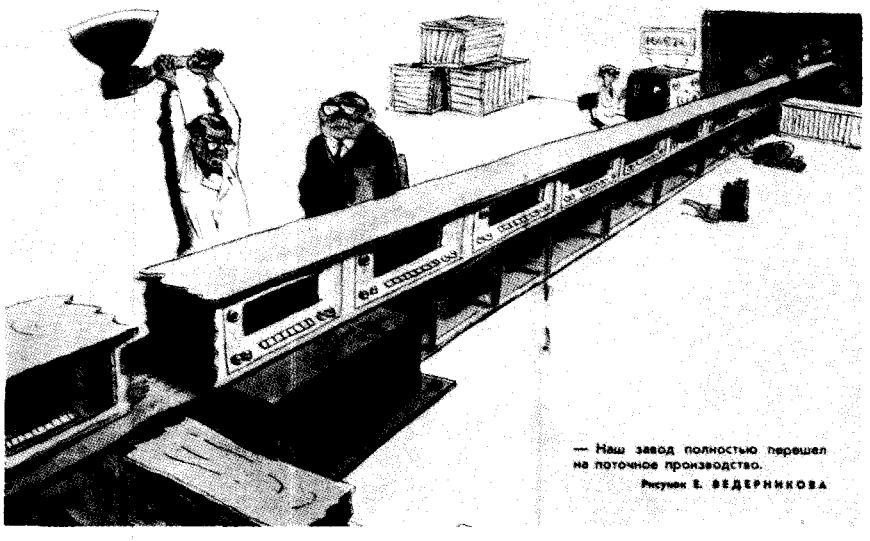
The most recent "campaign" launched in the USSR, under way since early this year, clearly falls in the third area and aims specifically at speeding up the rate of technological advance. Party organizations at all levels have initiated a wide variety of activities with this goal in view[12]; a conference on "economic problems of scientific and technical progress" has been held[13]; and at least one of the 15 Union Republics—Belorussia—has issued a sweeping decree "On Measures to Accelerate Technological Progress in the Republic's Industry, Construction, and Transportation."[14] This drive is but the latest in a series of efforts aimed at overcoming the "technological gap." Indeed, the general program of economic reform that was launched with such fanfare in the Soviet Union five years ago has likewise had the acceleration of technological progress as one of its major objectives. Let us therefore turn to the role of the general economic reform in the overall Soviet effort to deal with this problem.

The general reform of economic management initiated in the USSR in 1965 sought to foster technological progress both through a restructuring of central management institutions and through the creation of effective financial incentives to encourage the introduction of new technology and new products at the enterprise level. The latter approach included an attempt to improve the pricing of new equipment and products.

On the organizational side, a new State Committee for Science and Technology absorbed the State Committee for the Coordination of Scientific Research and was given the task of coordinating a many-pronged attack on the problem of ensuring technological progress in the Soviet economy. The 1965 reform also restored the pre-1957 system of

[12] For example, see *Partiinaia zhizn*, No. 1, 1970, pp. 45-53; No. 4, 1970, pp. 34-39; and No. 10, 1970, pp. 12-19; *Kommunist*, No. 3, 1970, pp. 80-91.

[13] *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 4, 1970, pp. 151-155.
[14] *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, April 15, 1970, pp. 1-2.



—Our factory has completely converted to assembly-line operations.

—From Krokodil (Moscow), No. 32, November 1968.

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industrial ministries. A principal argument for this restoration was the need to establish a unified approach to technological development in each branch of industry, the absence of such a unified policy having been the main sin laid at the door of the abolished and little lamented regional economic councils (*sovnarkhozy*). The restored ministries have been accorded broad powers in planning and implementing the development and introduction of technology in their respective domains.[15] Each ministry has become, in effect, the tsar in control of technological policy for its particular industry, where it is responsible for ensuring a unified and coordinated approach, but it must also coordinate its actions and proposals with such other state committees (*e.g.*, Science and Technology, Planning, Prices, Material-Technical Supply, Inventions and Discoveries, and Standards, Measures and Measuring Instruments) and ministries as might be concerned. If foreign purchases of plants, patents or licenses are involved, still other agencies must be consulted.

In the area of incentives, the reform established new success criteria for enterprises and granted them more leeway in certain areas of decision-making. Fulfillment of planned targets for sales or profits and for return on capital replaced gross value of output as the determinant of bonuses for managers and technicians. These bonuses are paid from a special "material incentive fund" formed out of profits. Presumably, new production techniques would be more profitable than old ones, thus inducing managers to introduce them in order to increase profits and hence managerial bonuses; however, fulfillment of the planned production goals set for "most important products" in physical output quantities still remains a necessary condition for payment of the bonuses. In addition, the reform permits enterprises to establish a separate "production development fund," also formed out of profits which they can draw upon to finance plant modernization without having to obtain direct state investment allocations—an obvious invitation to managers to upgrade production technology.

The framers of the economic reform also intended product prices, along with profits, to serve as "economic levers" for inducing innovation at the enterprise level. The new State Committee on Prices established in 1965 was given explicit responsibility for "raising the role of prices in promoting technical progress in all its many aspects."[16] In October 1966 and January 1967, wholesale prices for products of light industry and the food industry were revised. In July 1967, revised industrial wholesale prices were put into effect for machinery and other branches of heavy industry, the first major revision of such prices since 1955. The intent was to fix new relative prices which, among other things, would encourage firms to replace obsolete technologies and produce new products.

The complex incentive provisions established by the reform were, however, tacked on to an already existing and even more intricate set of arrangements—a patchwork quilt of devices introduced over the years with the specific aim of overcoming managerial resistance to innovation. One group of measures consists of numerous bonus systems financed in various complicated ways. For example, there are separate bonus schemes for producing new and better models of machines and equipment, for increasing the percentage of new products in total output, for fulfilling and overfulfilling output plans during periods when new technology is being mastered, for bringing production in new plants up to designed capacity on schedule, and for designing and producing new consumer goods. A second approach is to reimburse enterprises for the high initial costs of producing new products, particularly new machinery, through special "mastery" funds (*fondy osvoeniia*). The injection of the new incentive provisions of the economic reform on top of these already existing arrangements thus adds to the complexity of the overall incentives setup, without offering any real promise of heightened effectiveness.

New Approaches

Indeed, it quickly became obvious to the Soviet leaders that the melange of old and new incentive provisions and the new pricing structure were not going to improve matters significantly. Consequently, a number of supplementary measures have been taken during the past two years. They include new organizational approaches, changes in planning practices, and revised procedures for pricing new products and calculating the payoff of new invest-

[15] *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, No. 34, 1967, pp. 7-9.

[16] *Finansy SSSR*, No. 11, 1965, p. 93. When first established, the State Committee on Prices was subordinated to the State Planning Committee but was made an independent union-republic body at the end of 1969: *Pravda*, Dec. 31, 1969.

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ment. Speedy introduction of these measures was pushed by a major party-government decree promulgated in October 1968 "On Measures for Increasing the Efficiency of the Work of Scientific Organizations and Speeding up the Utilization of Scientific and Technical Achievements in the National Economy."[17]

Organizational Approaches: The decree of October 1968 recommended that the industrial ministries and other appropriate bodies establish "research-production complexes" combining research institutes, design bureaus, and production enterprises. Also, the ministries were to begin transferring the research and design organizations currently subordinate to them to the direct control of enterprises. In another step, the formation of new production associations (*obedineniia*) uniting several production enterprises for purposes of common marketing, investment, and research and development—which has been actively discussed in recent years—now has evidently been given high-level government sanction, mainly because of the advantages they are expected to provide in coordinating research and introducing new technology.[18] The press has already reported the formation of a few research-production complexes and a number of production associations. There have also been reports of the formation of some special research and design enterprises, completely outside the regular industrial management hierarchy, which fill orders for work under direct contract with industrial enterprises. They operate nominally under Komsomol or trade-union sponsorship.[19] It should be noted in this context that in recent years many research institutes, *e.g.*, the Novosibirsk Computer Center, have been supplementing their regular research program with work for industry on a contract basis.

Planning: Scarcely any aspect of the current drive to foster technological progress has been more discussed than steps to bring about "improved planning." The All-Union Conference on the Improvement of Economic Planning and Administration, held in Moscow in May 1968, devoted much of its attention and a major section of its recommendations specifically to planning for scientific and technological progress.[20] The party-government decree of October 1968 elaborated on these recommendations and instructed the State Committees for Science and Technology, for Planning, and for Construction Affairs, together with the USSR Academy of Sciences and other interested agencies, to prepare scientific and technical forecasts looking ahead for a period of 10-15 years or more. The decree also ordered responsible bodies at all levels to draw up detailed five-year plans for scientific and technical development in each branch of industry and each sector of the economy, with relevant portions of these five-year plans to be incorporated in the annual plans for such development.

Further, the Committee for Science and Technology, the State Planning Committee, the Central Statistical Administration, the Ministry of Finance, and the Academy of Sciences have been directed to work out a system of planning, statistical and accounting indexes for science and technology that will (1) measure the extent of technological progress in each plant, industry and sector of the economy, and (2) make it possible "to determine actual savings from the application of scientific and technological development and to evaluate the correctness of technological policy in the branches of the national economy." Soviet press accounts indicate that these agencies have set about their task with zeal, directing the various individual ministries to work on specific problems of forecasting, planning, and "index construction" for their respective branches of industry.[21]

Soviet press discussions concerning preparation of the annual plan for 1970 and the Ninth Five-Year Plan (for the years 1971-75) make it evident that the sections dealing with the development and introduction of new products and technologies have been greatly upgraded in importance.[22] The binding force of these sections is being strengthened, and additional agencies (the State Planning Committee, for one) have been enlisted to "control" (*i.e.*, monitor) plan fulfillment. Finally, these sections are being made not only more detailed and complex but also much more oriented toward calculations in value terms. Presumably the new indexes of technological progress that are being developed will ultimately be made obligatory plan targets.

Price Fixing: For at least a decade, Soviet economists have argued over the question of how to set

[17] *Pravda*, Oct. 23, 1968.
[18] *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 8, 1968, p. 88.
[19] *Literaturnaia gazeta*, No. 4, 1970, p. 10.
[20] *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 8, 1968, pp. 71-96.
[21] *Ibid.*, No. 7, 1969, pp. 25-30; No. 5, 1970, pp. 79-86.
[22] *Ibid.*, No. 7, 1969, pp. 22-32; *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 3, 1969, pp. 39-45.

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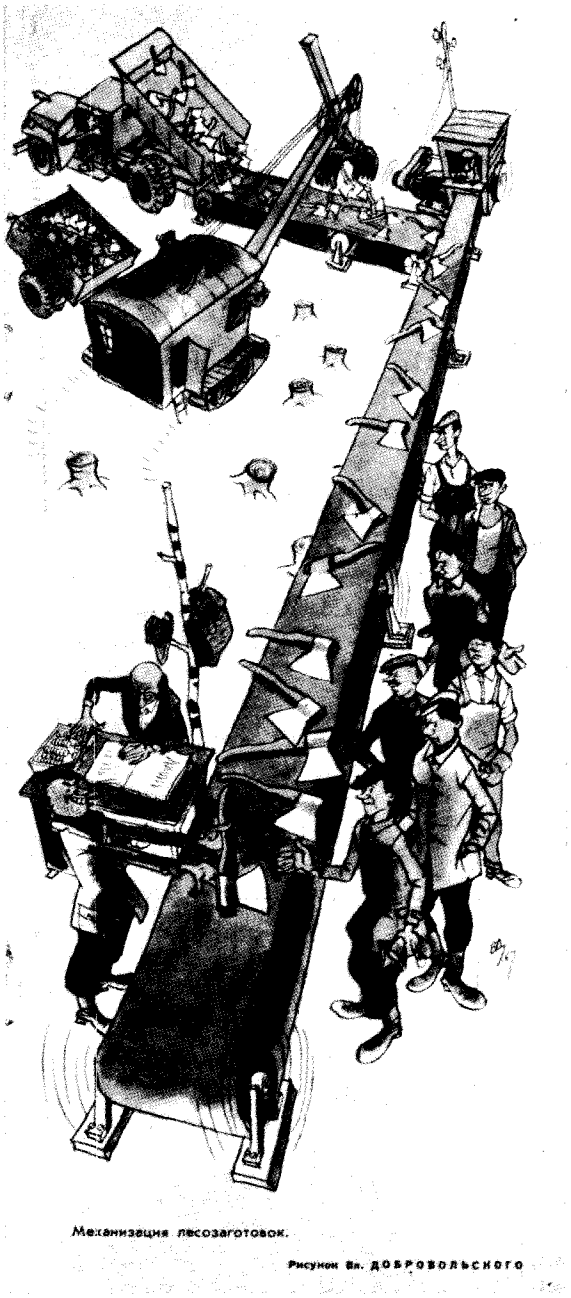
prices for new products and new technologies so as to encourage their production and application. Following the establishment of the State Committee on Prices in 1965 and the introduction of revised industrial wholesale prices in 1966-67, press discussions on this theme reached veritable flood proportions. Both price-setters and academic economists were clearly dissatisfied with the new price structure as a stimulator of technical progress almost from the start.[23] Participants in two mammoth conferences, the May 1968 conference on planning and another on price-fixing held in February 1969, made various recommendations on this score.[24] The pricing problem could be "solved," they said, (1) if prices of new products and new technological processes were set high enough to induce producers to generate them, but not so high as to discourage their purchase; and (2) if prices of old products and outmoded technologies were automatically adjusted in such a way as to encourage their replacement with new ones. These are appropriate objectives, but their implementation by price-fixers is another matter.



Mechanization of Timber-Cutting

—From Krokodil (Moscow), No. 26, September 1967.

The near chaotic state of pricing in this area was evidenced by frequent instances of the purchase of new equipment that either yielded no savings at all or resulted in savings far too small to justify the cost of the new equipment. A typical complaint was the following:

In a number of cases, the increasing cost of new machines has considerably exceeded the increase in their productivity. One hundred fifty-one new machines were installed at the Yegorev knit goods plant. They cost more than twice as much as the old machines, but their output is the same.[25]

Another writer described the state of affairs in this fashion:

Under these conditions only two variants are possible. Either, the price of the new product is so low that it does not cover all the costs of production, does not compensate [the producer] for the possible risks and does not guarantee extra income for the enterprise. Such "administered" prices are usually backed up by the "mastery" fund, credit, etc. Or the price is too high, so that [prospective] users are not interested in the new technology. This leads to administrative pressure in the form of a campaign against technological conservatism, along with direct or concealed subsidies to buyers of the new equipment for financing their investment.[26]

More generally, Soviet critics see the problem in terms of fixing "right" prices for new products—*i.e.*, prices which would in fact induce producers to introduce new designs. Actually, many so-called

[23] For a discussion and evaluation of the 1966-67 price reform in general, see: Gertrude E. Schroeder, "The 1966-67 Soviet Industrial Price Reform: A Study in Complications," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. II, No. 4, April 1969, pp. 462-77.
[24] *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 8, 1968, pp. 71-96; No. 4, 1969, pp. 89-95.
[25] *Ibid.*, No. 10, 1969, p. 26.
[26] *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 2, 1968, p. 153.

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new products are merely old ones with insignificant modifications.

In July 1969, the State Committee on Prices issued a new set of rules for fixing prices on new products and new technologies with a view to bringing order to existing practices. The revised procedure makes a novel concept—the "limit price"—one of the "most important technical-economic parameters of a given task" and requires all design organizations to employ it.[27] This rule means that products must be designed and priced so as to yield some net cost savings to the prospective purchaser of the new technology. The actual prices for new products intended for serial production and designed to replace existing ones are to be set within a defined range. The upper limit of the range is the price at which the purchaser is "indifferent" as to choice between the new and the old technology; the lower limit is the price at which the producer is "indifferent" as to whether to make the new or the old product. How the bureaucrats mediate producer and consumer interests and set a final price somewhere in this range is not specified.

Different methods are established for setting prices on other categories of new products, such as those produced in the USSR for the first time. Finally, the new methodology provides for the establishment of "graduated prices" that decline automatically over a set period in accordance with either the planned rate of decrease in production costs or the estimated obsolescence of the product. Based on these general guidelines, the ministries are supposed to work out detailed methodologies, taking into account the price and product peculiarities found in each industry. Evidently not much has been done along these lines as yet, for energetic discussion continues in the Soviet press concerning the problem of setting prices so as to stimulate innovation.[28]

Return on Investment: In addition to the new price-fixing procedures, a new methodology for determining the efficiency of capital investment and new technology has also been published recently.[29] These rules, announced in September 1969, replace earlier ones that had been adopted in 1959. They explicitly set for the first time a standard minimum rate of return on capital investment (12%) and redefine the method of calculating the rate of return to conform with the concepts of the economic reform. The ministries are to draft detailed instructions for their respective branches of industry on the basis of the new guidelines. The return on investment for the economy as a whole, and for its branches, is henceforth to be calculated as the ratio of "profits" to the total value of fixed assets and working capital. As defined, total profits include payment of the capital charge established by the reform (usually 6 percent), interest on bank loans, and planned allocations to the three incentive funds (bonuses, production development, and social welfare) set up by the reform. Allowances are to be made for construction and installation lags, with norms to be set for permissible delays.

The new rules represent a redefinition of the much-discussed "coefficient of relative effectiveness" (CRE), or "recoupment period," long used by Soviet planners in project-selection. The old CRE was calculated as the *savings* in production costs per ruble of investment cost; the new CRE is defined as *profits* per ruble of investment cost. Finally, the new rules specify that only in exceptional cases should an investment yielding less than 12 percent per annum be undertaken. Soviet economists seem to regard this new methodology as a great step forward toward rational investment choice.

Unabated Criticism

Nevertheless, judging by the criticisms that have continued to flood the Soviet press in the last year,[30] the regime's multiple approaches to the problem of fostering technological innovation have thus far failed to bring about the desired improvement and may even be creating new deterrents to progress. During the first four years of the current 1966-70 five-year plan, the average annual rate of productivity gain in Soviet industry has actually been below the poor record of 1961-65.[31] The volume of unfinished construction relative to investment also remains high—at a level roughly two-thirds above

[27] *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, No. 31, 1969, p. 11.
[28] *Kommunist Ukrainy*, August 1969, p. 51; *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, No. 40, 1969, pp. 5-6; No. 11, 1970, pp. 5-6; No. 20, 1970, pp. 5-6; No. 22, 1970, pp. 5-6.
[29] *Ibid.*, No. 39, 1969, pp. 11-12.
[30] *E.g.*, *Izvestia*, Feb. 13, 1970; *Pravda*, July 29, Oct. 31, Dec. 21, 1969, Feb. 6 and 21, and March 30, 1970; *Sovetskaia Belorussiia*, March 12, 1970; *Politicheskoe samoobrazovanie*, No. 1, 1970, pp. 34-41; *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 9, 1969, p. 35; No. 10, 1969, pp. 44, 65.
[31] Joint Economic Committee, *Soviet Economic Performance, 1968-69*, p. 21.

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that in the United States. Finally, implementation of the measures provided for in the October 1968 party-government decree is proceeding slowly at best, suggesting the persistence of strong psychological barriers to change in the Soviet bureaucracy.

As a consequence of this evident lack of progress, there has been a spate of new proposals by both officials and academic economists centering on problems of planning and restructuring incentives for the development of new technology and products. In the main, however, the changes currently being proposed would have the effect of weaving around the producing enterprises an even tighter and more tangled web of rules, directives and controls.

Recent critiques of the regime's planning for innovation in the economy repeat already familiar complaints of fragmentation, inconsistency and lack of coordination.[32] In view of the fact that plans for the production of new products and for the introduction of new technology continue to be significantly underfulfilled, some critics have recommended that their fulfillment should be made a precondition for payment of any bonuses and that indexes of the economic effectiveness of new technology should be made obligatory plan targets.[33]

Sharp criticism has also been leveled at the multiple incentive arrangements aimed at promoting innovation. The system of special bonuses for introducing new technology has been assailed as largely ineffective,[34] and the rules for forming the three enterprise incentive funds established under the economic reform have been continually criticized from their inception because of their complexity and their contradictory and inconsistent provisions.[35] The only significant change in these rules since the inception of the reform, however, complicates them even more by ordering that—effective January 1, 1971—the size of the incentive funds be related to enterprise performance in fulfilling plans for increasing labor productivity as well as in fulfilling plans for sales or for profits and profitability.[36]

One group of critics urges that the incentive system as a whole be drastically simplified by combining all of the separate funds into one—an enterprise incentive fund formed from profits—with the payment of bonuses for innovation to come from this fund.[37] They also continue to urge—as they have in the past—that the present extremely complicated formula for establishing the incentive funds be replaced by one based on a straight percentage deduction from profits. Another group of critics would retain the existing multiplicity of bonus arrangements, but would increase the amounts of the bonuses and attempt to relate them more sensibly to the economic benefits actually derived from innovations.[38] Other proposals would relate allocations to incentive funds more directly to enterprise success in introducing new products and new technology.[39]

The methods of financing the development of new products and new technology have likewise come under increasing attack, particularly on account of their complexity. Multiple sources of financing can now be tapped—*i.e.*, the new production development fund formed out of enterprise profits, the "mastery" fund, funds released through permission to include the cost of research in production costs, bank credits, and budget financing. Some critics have urged merging the "mastery" fund into the production development fund and enlarging this fund in various ways.[40] Others recommend retention of the two separate funds but would change the rules governing their formation and expenditure so as to heighten their impact on innovation.[41] With respect to bank credits, even though the economic reform has extended the permissible amounts and terms of bank loans, broadened the range of projects for which credit may be extended, and given both banks and enterprises greater discretionary authority, the size of loans to finance new technology is presently restricted to amounts that can be

[32] *Pravda*, Sept. 16, 1969; *Kommunist Ukrainy*, *Aug.* 1969, p. 55.
[33] *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 7, 1969, p. 31; No. 8, 1968, p. 38; No. 3, 1969, pp. 54, 60; No. 10, 1969, pp. 65-66; *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 7, 1968, p. 110; *Izvestia*, Jan. 18, 1970.
[34] *Izvestia*, July 24, 1969; *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 8, 1968, p. 39; *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 7, 1968, pp. 109-10; *Pravda*, March 30, 1969; *Finansy SSSR*, No. 9, 1969, p. 52.
[35] For a review and analysis of these rules, see G. E. Schroeder, "The Soviet Economic 'Reform': A Study in Contradictions," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. II, No. 1, July 1968, pp. 1-21.
[36] *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, No. 16, 1969, p. 11; No. 24, 1969, p. 11.
[37] *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 12, 1968, p. 54; *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 11, 1968, p. 22.
[38] *Standarty i kachestvo*, No. 2, 1968, p. 69; *Finansy SSSR*, No. 9, 1969, p. 53; *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 3, 1970, pp. 58-61; *Ekonomicheskaia gazeta*, No. 18, 1969, p. 20; G. D. Anisimov, Ed., *Nauchno-teknicheskii progress i ekonomicheskaia reforma*, Moscow, 1969, pp. 237-52.
[39] *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 6, 1968, pp. 30-32; No. 8, 1968, p. 37; *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 7, 1968, p. 111; *Izvestia*, Jan. 18, 1970; *Pravda*, Sept. 16, 1969.
[40] *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 10, 1969, p. 66.
[41] *Kommunist Ukrainy*, August 1969, pp. 50-51; *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 2, 1968, p. 154; No. 4, 1970, pp. 97-107; *Finansy SSSR*, No. 9, 1969, pp. 51-53; No. 1, 1970, pp. 39-42, *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 2, 1969, p. 7; No. 3, 1969, p. 60; Anisimov, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-36.

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ment fund. Not only are these funds usually small, repaid from the enterprise's production develop- but their expenditure is circumscribed by a maze of rules and regulations, *e.g.*, use of the funds is limited to renovation and expansion of existing processes—it cannot be used to construct completely new production lines. Proposals for remedying these deficiencies are numerous and varied.[42]

The Prognosis

Although the many-faceted drive to accelerate Soviet technological progress is still young, its present thrust seems unlikely to produce significant results, even if given a great deal more time. The main reason for this conclusion is that the Soviet leadership, as in the past, is still relying largely on administrative methods of resolving the problem. When the economic reform was introduced, it was supposed to provide the key to success in the form of "economic levers" that would automatically foster innovation. Instead, however, these new "levers" are being manipulated to an ever greater degree by the economic bureaucracy, which means that Soviet planners are now attempting to manage the process of technological change at a level of detail never before attempted. The result must surely be an intensified bureaucratization of Soviet economic life, precisely the danger to socialism predicted by Oskar Lange.[43] In other words, the more the planners seek micro-efficiency, the more bureaucratic the system becomes.

In reality, the provisions of the economic reform itself—as now constituted—are inimical to innovation. Even some Soviet economists have made this observation, although they have been excoriated for their views.[44] With bonuses geared to profits and return on capital, the enterprise manager now has to pay much more attention than before to production costs, including the costs of capital. In order to fulfill and overfulfill plans for profits and profitability, he will presumably try to keep the size of his capital stock as low as feasible so as to reduce the capital charge and to increase profits and the rate of profitability. Moreover, since enterprise success is still measured by fulfillment of annual plans, managerial decisions will, as before, tend to give priority to short-run gains over possible long-run benefits. Hence, managers are likely to be reluctant to add new capital or to undertake equipment changeovers, because to do so would not only cause a temporary disruption of production but would also adversely affect the level of profits and profitability. In addition, the complex incentive and pricing arrangements make it more difficult for managers to calculate both the actual payoff of innovation and their personal stake in it. Finally, the reform is being carried out in an atmosphere of taut planning and a seller's market in producer goods. This is evident from the persistent pressure on enterprises to disclose "hidden reserves" and to submit "realistic" plans.

Thus, the current reforms retain all the features of the Soviet milieu that deterred innovation in the past, and they even add some new deterrents of their own. In electing to use prices and profit-related incentives to spur innovation in the economy, the planners have taken a "great leap forward" in their involvement in the minutiae of economic life. They are attempting not only to fix prices in sufficient detail to make them stimulants to innovation, but also to impart "flexibility" to these prices—not, however, in relation to consumer demand, but in relation to the administrators' notions of the degree of product obsolescence and "economically justified" reductions in production costs. The new "graduated prices" may well provide incentives for purchasing old machinery rather than new. And the mind boggles at the enormity of the task involved in the Soviet planners' declared intent to calculate the effectiveness of thousands of new machines and pieces of equipment. In effect, the price fixers are attempting to simulate the discipline over producers that is afforded by clamorous customers in a market system.

In short, the innovative process is not merely being "routinized," to borrow the term of Gregory Grossman[45]; it is being rapidly "bureaucraticized." The difference is significant. It means multiplying the number of managers to a much greater degree than before, inasmuch as the detailed planning and management of the innovative process is being performed by an army of bureaucrats in the ministries and state committees in Moscow as well as in the

[42] *Planovoe khoziaistvo*, No. 8, 1969, p. 41; No. 10, 1969, pp. 67-68; *Kommunist*, No. 2, 1969, p. 67; *Sovetskoe gosudarstvo i pravo*, No. 11, 1969, pp. 82-86; *Dengi i kredit*, No. 3, 1970, pp. 84-87.

[43] *On the Economic Theory of Socialism*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1966, p. 109.

[44] *Voprosy ekonomiki*, No. 11, 1968, p. 17.

[45] Gregory Grossman, "Innovation and Information in the Soviet Economy," *American Economic Review*, Vol. LVI, No. 2, May 1966, pp. 117-30.

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republic and provincial capitals. Small wonder that employment in the state apparatus has risen rapidly since 1965.

Furthermore, the detailed central planning of individual projects, of plan indicators of technological progress, of prices, of incentive funds, of product output and the product mix of producers' goods, of capital and material allocations, and of profits and the rate of return on capital—combined with unplanned shortages on all sides—means that the individual enterprise operates within an almost unbelievable number of constraints. These constraints, it should be noted, are not *economic* in any meaningful sense; rather, they are essentially *administrative* in nature. The values (relative prices and payoffs of innovation) that are embodied in them do not and cannot reflect relative scarcities of resources inasmuch as these values are not market-determined. The adverse impact of the constraints is further multiplied by their very complexity, by continuing changes, and by the fact that, despite talk about allowing initiative at the enterprise level, the bureaucracy feels compelled to provide multitudinous instructions and "norms" that tell the enterprises how to exercise delegated authority and how to use their supposedly greater freedom of decision-making. How real technological progress can ever flourish under such conditions is difficult to see.

Politinformator or Agitator: A Decision Blocked

By Aryeh L. Unger

Only rarely are outsiders able to obtain a comprehensive view of decision-making processes in the Soviet Union, especially those which involve various groupings of the party *apparat* in sharp confrontation with one another. In most instances, only the final outcomes of these conflicts become known in the form of policy pronouncements and statutes, while the elements of the processes themselves—the opposing groups and individuals, the substance of their various positions, and the mode of reconciling their differences—remain obscure to the public at large. It is all the more illuminating, therefore, when a fairly detailed record becomes available concerning a major policy issue in the making, as is the case with the still ongoing and unresolved controversy in the USSR over the best method of conducting domestic propaganda.

To understand this issue, it might be useful to recall briefly the distinction made by the Soviets between propaganda and agitation. Following Georgi Plekhanov's definition, accepted by Lenin as early as 1902, propaganda is defined as the presentation of "many ideas to a few persons" and

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agitation as the propounding of "one or a few ideas . . . to a mass of people."[1] It should be noted that while the contrast between agitation and propaganda is formulated in quantitative terms, the difference is one of quality, with "propaganda" referring to a reasoned argument while "agitation" connotes exhortation and appeals to the emotions.

These conceptual distinctions have been faithfully retained since Lenin's day and have largely shaped the practice of Soviet domestic communications; it is only in recent years that sporadic proposals have been put forward in favor of obliterating them,[2] with some theoreticians arguing that a fusion of propaganda and agitation was required by "current conditions."[3] In particular, doubts were beginning to be aired publicly as early as 1965 concerning the appropriateness of using the "agitator" system to mobilize mass support in a largely industrialized society characterized by universal literacy, the wide spread of specialized knowledge and expertise, and the existence of mass communications media. Concrete proposals were advanced in the press to replace the traditional agitators with more sophisticated "politinformators"—that is, information specialists capable of influencing knowledgeable mass audiences.

The result was that by 1967 politinformators had emerged on the agitprop scene in the USSR as a countrywide institution. One year later their number was reported to have reached some 600,000. Since then, it has undoubtedly increased considerably and may now stand at over two million.[4]

The politinformator's functions are very similar to those of the traditional agitator. Both conduct talks on current topics before small groups at economic enterprises, farms, offices, etc. at regular intervals, usually weekly. There are, however, three major differences. First, whereas agitators are primarily drawn from the ranks of the "more advanced" workers and peasants, the great majority of politinformators are party and state officials, economic managers, scientists, engineers, agronomists, etc. Second, unlike the agitator, who is expected to give talks on a wide variety of topics, the politinformator specializes in one of four broad subject areas: domestic policy, international affairs, economics, or so-called cultural matters.[5] The third difference is one of organization and deployment: while the agitators are organized in agit-collectives and operate at the lowest level of the party hierarchy down to the party group (a subgroup of the primary party organization, established where the latter's size exceeds a stipulated optimum figure), the politinformators are organized in separate "groups" and operate under the direct guidance either of the committees of the larger primary party organizations (those with at least 300 members in industry and 50 members in agriculture) or of the committees of the district (*raion*) party organizations. Thus, while the agitators conduct their mass political work exclusively within the particular section of the enterprise in which they work, the politinformators can, and often do, move from section to section of the same enterprise and, in the case of politinformators subordinate to district committees, from enterprise to enterprise in the same district.

Agitators under Fire

Soviet sources generally credit the initiation of the politinformators to a resolution adopted by the 23rd Party Congress in April 1966,[6] although it was not until the end of 1966 or the beginning of 1967 that implementary action was actually decided upon. However, even for some time prior to the 23rd Congress, an attentive reader of the party press could have discerned indications that a fundamental reform of the agitation system was imminent. One such indication was the emphasis placed in almost every press discussion of the work of agitators on the importance of specialization. The general cultural level of the population, it was

[1] Cited in V. I. Lenin, "What is to Be Done?", *Selected Works in Three Volumes*, New York, International Publishers, 1967, Vol. 1, p. 152.

[2] This tendency dates from the Central Committee decree "On the Tasks of Party Propaganda in Contemporary Conditions," adopted on January 9, 1960. See *Spravochnik partiinovo rabotnika*, Moscow, 1961, pp. 486-508; also F. C. Barghoorn, *Politics in the USSR*, Boston, Little, Brown & Co., 1966, pp. 123-26.

[3] A. T. Kabanov, "Leninskii printsip sviazi propagandy s zhizniu," in I. I. Groshev, ed., *Iz opyta ideologicheskoi raboty partiinykh organizatsii*, Moscow, 1965, p. 28.

[4] *Agitator*, No. 6, 1968, p. 21, No. 8, 1968, p. 44. Early in 1970 it was authoritatively stated that there were 15,000-20,000 politinformators in each of the regions (*oblasti*) of the USSR (*Agitator*, No. 3, 1970, p. 50). This would put their total number at around 2.5 million.

[5] In practice, agitators have tended to concentrate on economic themes, especially those directly pertaining to the task performance of their enterprises. Politinformator talks on "cultural matters" usually relate to such subjects as hooliganism, drunkenness, anti-religious propaganda, labor discipline, and other aspects of Communist morality.

[6] The pertinent provisions of the resolution and their interpretation will be discussed in detail further on in this article.

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argued, had risen to the point where the traditional agitator-generalist (*agitator-universal*) had little, if anything, to add to what could be learned from other sources, notably from the mass media, and it was only by specializing in a particular subject area that he could hope to preserve his role in the communication process. Some agit-collectives were already reported to be switching over to a pattern of specialization which, though by no means uniform, was not dissimilar to that later implemented by the politinformators: in two Leningrad industrial plants, in fact, agitators specializing respectively in domestic and foreign policy were already being referred to as "politinformators."[7]

More significant than the press comments on specialization, however, were the mounting criticisms of the agitators' work. Some of these criticisms appear justified and, indeed, were not altogether new; what *was* new, however, was their frequency and candor. The first shot in what was quickly to develop into something like an "open season" on agitators in the party press was fired in February 1965 by an obscure functionary, himself the head of a shop agit-collective in the Volgograd tractor plant. Agitation as currently practiced, he wrote, "is either too general and divorced from life and specific economic-political tasks, or it is very primitive, shallow in content, and devoid of profound generalizations." The author's description of agitational work in his shop revealed not only the disparaging attitude of "some enterprise leaders who regard agitation as irrelevant to "concrete production tasks," but also—and more strikingly—the apathy of the agitators themselves:

Thursday is our agitation day. On Wednesday, before the shift, I unfailingly go around to all [agitators]: "Don't forget, tomorrow is your day. What talk do you propose to conduct? Is everything clear? "And yet not everyone conducts his talk. Some explain: "We couldn't prepare ourselves." Others say, "Why have the talk? It won't change matters anyway." [8]

Criticisms of the "formal," "mechanical," or "superficial" activity of agitators—or, indeed, of their total inactivity—became constantly recurring themes in the Soviet press in 1965 and early 1966. In one place, it was reported, posters and similar materials were kept under lock and key; in another, there were 24 agitators but "they don't do anything." In Leningrad, a report stated, there were supposed to be 100,000 agitators, but many of these existed "on paper only," and their recruitment was described as often based on the principle of "You have no other special duty (*nagruzka*); so you'll be an agitator."[9] Perhaps the most ominous criticism of all appeared in an article by M. A. Morozov, head of the Agitation Section of the Central Committee's Propaganda and Agitation Department, in January 1966. After declaring that there was much that was "obsolete and decrepit" in Soviet agitation, Morozov went on to say:

The organization of the agit-collective itself and the forms and methods of its activity need perfecting. All questions of the methodology of agitational mass work require serious study. It would be wrong to decide these questions in a stereotyped manner. . . . But they must be solved. It is a task which brooks no delay.[10]

Some critics even went so far as to question the continued need for the whole system of oral agitation. According to one account, "a considerable proportion of our ideological workers" seemed to believe that, with wider public access to the mass media, oral agitation had become altogether superfluous, or at best was useful only in dealing with "backward segments" of the population.[11] Given the hallowed tradition attached to oral agitation, such accusations were little short of heretical, and the fact that they were publicized at all may well indicate that they had substantial backing in party circles. It must be stressed, however, that they were instantly and unequivocally refuted in the Soviet press.[12]

In any event, there was abundant evidence prior to the 23rd Congress of critical concern about the state of oral agitation. There were, however, no indications of the nature of the reforms contemplated other than the reported Leningrad experiments with agitator specialization. Nor was the picture clarified by the published statements of the then newly-appointed head of the Central Committee's Propaganda and Agitation Department, V. I. Stepakov, who was subsequently to reveal himself as the principal advocate of politinformators. In his first two published statements after

[7] *Agitator*, No. 6, 1965, p. 30; No. 16, 1965, pp. 24-25; No. 21, 1965, pp. 29-30; No. 5, 1966, p. 43; No. 6, 1966, p. 37.
[8] *Ibid.*, No. 3, 1965, pp. 29-33.
[9] *Ibid.*, No. 4, 1965, p. 6; No. 14, 1965, p. 3; No. 21, 1965, p. 31; No. 7, 1966, p. 35; *Pravda*, Feb. 23, 1966.
[10] *Agitator*, No. 1, 1966, p. 39.
[11] *Ibid.*, No. 16, 1965, p. 31; No. 21, 1965, p. 31; No. 6, 1966, pp. 37-8.
[12] *Kommunist*, No. 10, 1965, pp. 45-6, 52.

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his appointment (in August and November 1965[13]) Stepakov addressed himself exclusively to the subject of propaganda and the theoretical training of party members, making no explicit reference whatever to agitation—a highly curious omission in view of the critical attention it was currently receiving in the Soviet press. In all his published statements, indeed, Stepakov studiously avoided even using the word "agitation," preferring instead such terms as "mass propaganda" or "mass political propaganda." It should be noted in this connection that in May 1966 the word "Agitation" was dropped from the title of what had until then been the Central Committee's Department of Propaganda and Agitation.

Genesis of the Politinformator

The particular provision in the 23rd Congress resolution which the Soviet press has repeatedly cited as the genesis of the politinformator as a formal institution stated that "all political agitation must be based on the broad and regular dissemination of information to the population on the political, economic and cultural life of the country and the international situation." Taken by itself, this provision was broad enough to serve as authorization for a far-reaching reform of the agitation system, and possibly even for the replacement of agitators by politinformators. However, the clause was part of a paragraph, and it is exceedingly doubtful that it was intended to be read out of context. The entire paragraph is as follows:

The Congress charges the party organizations with making serious improvements in mass political work. It is necessary to explain the party's policy thoroughly and clearly, without evading acute problems, to be sensitive to the demands and spiritual requirements of the masses, and to take into consideration the heightened cultural and educational level of the Soviet people. All political agitation must be based on the broad and regular dissemination of information to the population on the political, economic and cultural life of the country and the international situation. It is necessary to ensure regular reports to the working people by party, state, economic and public leaders on questions of the state's domestic and foreign policy and on the work of the party, government, and public organizations, as well as reports by leaders of the local soviets and agencies of public education, health and trade, enterprises of the communal economy, and everyday services.[14]

Read in the context of the whole paragraph, the statement in question appears to have been intended merely as a rhetorical preamble to the following sentence calling for regular reports by leading personnel, which would seem to be the operative clause.

There are still more cogent reasons for doubting that any part of this paragraph was actually intended to provide the basis for a fundamental reform of the agitation system. Had this been contemplated, one could expect to find some reference to it in the proceedings of the Congress—if not in the speeches of some of the participants, then at least in Brezhnev's report on behalf of the Central Committee—but a careful review of the Congress materials produces no such clues. Brezhnev's report included the usual platitudes concerning ideological work, but there was nothing in it to suggest that he shared the view of Morozov and others that the system of agitation had become "obsolete and decrepit" and was in urgent need of reform. Indeed, Brezhnev included agitators among the "splendid cadres" of the party, "truly a golden asset" which must be "cherished, solicitously nurtured, and correctly utilized." By contrast, another section of Brezhnev's report emphatically called for regular reports by leading personnel (as provided for in the final Congress resolution), and this demand was later supported by Shelest.[15]

Editorial comment on the Congress and its implications for ideological work likewise gave no indication that the Congress resolution was understood at the time as heralding an important change in the forms of mass agitation. If any part of the resolution was singled out for special mention, it was the requirement that leading officials report

[13] *Pravda*, Aug. 4, 1965; *Kommunist*, No. 16, 1965, pp. 32-46. Stepakov's appointment probably dates from May 1965. He became editor of *Izvestia* following Khrushchev's fall in October 1964, and his official biography lists him in that post until May 1965. See *Bolshaia Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia, Yezhegodnik 1965*, p. 603. On July 31 he was first mentioned as head of the Central Committee Department for Propaganda and Agitation (Radio Liberty, *Daily Information Bulletin*, Aug. 3, 1965).

[14] *XXIII Sezd Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskovo Soyuza. Stenograficheskii otchet*, Moscow, 1966, Vol. II, pp. 316-17. Since the clause does not easily fit into the paragraph, an alternative explanation might be that it was deliberately slipped in to prepare the ground for the introduction of politinformators at some later date. Stepakov was a member of the Resolutions Commission, and it is possible that those sections of the Congress resolutions relating to agitrop matters were left to his discretion. Certainly the clause is vague and innocuous enough to have escaped the notice of those who might have opposed it if they realized that it was designed to pave the way for the replacement of agitators by politinformators.

[15] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 89, 106, 137.

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regularly to the general public. This was termed a "very important" or even an "extraordinarily important" instruction. For the rest, the resolution was either ignored or quoted verbatim without any particular emphasis or comment on the clause calling for all agitation to be based on information.[16]

In the six months following the 23rd Congress, the treatment of agitators in the party press continued along much the same lines as in 1965 and early 1966. Two articles, however, took a slightly different tack. The first was from the pen of Yu. Fishevskii, head of an unidentified section of the Central Committee's Propaganda and Agitation Department, and appeared in May 1966. After referring to the 23rd Congress resolution as a document of "immense" importance, Fishevskii went on to say:

Not long ago we had occasion to acquaint ourselevs with the experience of the Sovetskii ward of Omsk in regard to attracting leading workers to agitation-propaganda work. . . . and we have arrived at the conclusion that this experience deserves attention. This applies especially to the practice of conducting political information sessions.[17]

This was tantamount to an explicit endorsement by a senior official of the Agitprop aparatus of the use of politinformators. Fishevskii's article, however, broached the subject primarily in the context of "attracting leading workers to agitation-propaganda work," and it would therefore be difficult—at least at this stage—to interpret his remarks as advocating a wholesale replacement of agitators by politinformators.

The second of the two articles was authored by Stepakov himself and appeared in *Pravda* of August 27, 1966. Stepakov had headed a delegation which toured Hungary to observe ideological work, and the article was primarily a report of that tour. It had nothing but praise for Hungarian practice, which was said to contain "much that is valuable and worthy of attention and application in our country." In particular, the report stressed the "great importance" attached by the Hungarians to the dissemination of information both as an index of socialist democracy and as a weapon against bourgeois propaganda. The measures adopted by the Hungarian party in this field were said to have shown "positive results" and to have "increased the faith of the population in the printed and spoken word of the party." Stepakov then brought in the subject of agitation—through the back door as it were—in a description of a new type of "questions and answers" meeting for small groups:

This is a unique form of agitational work, but it is not the agit-collective which conducts it. The Hungarian party organizations have found it inexpedient to maintain agitators and agit-collectives as a specialized institution. They consider that every party member is obliged to carry out the function of explaining the policy of the party . . . in the section in which he works and among the people with whom he daily communicates.

Stepakov went no further; yet his seemingly noncommittal description of the Hungarian party's view of agitational work strongly implied his own agreement with it.

In September 1966, Stepakov published another article entitled "Party Propaganda: New Conditions—New Demands," which dealt with subjects broadly similar to those covered in his 1965 articles. It did, however, add one point (made in connection with the 23rd Congress resolution)—namely, that "systematic and broad information" was "one of the most important means of raising the level of political understanding of the working people."[18]

Conference on Information Policy

Several weeks later, from October 11 to 25, an all-Union conference-seminar of ideological workers took place in Moscow. It was a fairly high-powered affair, the participants including Central Committee Secretaries Demichev, Andropov, Kapitonov, Kulakov, and Ponomarev, senior officials of the Central Committee apparatus, ministers and officials of the central government, and party secretaries of the republics, regions, and territories. Secretary Demichev (also a candidate member of the Politburo) gave the opening as well as the concluding address, with Stepakov delivering the first report.

According to *Agitator*, which provided the most extensive coverage of the conference, Stepakov "posed for discussion" the question: "Under contemporary conditions and in accord with the decisions of the 23rd Congress of the CPSU, what persons and what institutions can best ensure broad

[16] *Agitator*, No. 8, 1966, pp. 3-12, No. 9, 1966, p. 6; *Pravda*, May 12, 1966, Aug. 16, 1966; *Kommunist*, No. 6, 1966, pp. 9-11, No. 12, 1966, p. 9; No. 13, 1966, pp. 3-11; *Partiinaia zhizn*, No. 7, 1966, pp. 13-17, No. 8, 1966, pp. 10-11; No. 10, 1966, pp. 3-7.

[17] *Partiinaia zhizn*, No. 9, 1966, p. 59.

[18] *Kommunist*, No. 13, 1966, pp. 18.

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and consistent oral information for the public?" His own reply, this time, was unequivocal: none of the existing ideological workers could cope with the task, either because—in the case of the *lektori* (lecturers) or *dokladchiki* (speakers)—they were otherwise occupied, or because—in the case of most agitators—they were incapable of it. As Stepakov put it, "Not every agitator is able to convey information in a systematic and qualified manner," and what was needed instead was a new type of political communicator:

We need qualified informators, people capable of conducting this section of work. . . . Let them be provisionally called propagandist-informators or propagandist-commentators. The matter is not in the name, but in the essence. And the essence is that the training and general culture of these persons should be considerably higher than that of the agitator. It would seem that the selection, training, retraining, and the system of studies and instruction must be the same as for the cadres of propagandists, taking into account, of course, the specific features of their work. The journal *Agitator*, the "Agitator Notebooks," and the Houses and Cabinets of Political Education must in consequence be reconstituted.

As to whether any role remained for the agitator, Stepakov went on to say that there was "no necessity . . . to decree the abolition of the institutions of agitators, agit-collectives, agit-points. Life, experience, and practice will show how to deal with them henceforth."[19] However, his statement, made as it was in the context of a disparaging appraisal of the ability of agitators to take on the new tasks of oral communication, clearly sounded their death knell. There might be no need to "decree" their abolition, but there could be little doubt that, in Stepakov's view, "life, experience, and practice" would accomplish the same result.

There is some evidence that Stepakov's position did not meet with universal approval at the conference. The *Agitator* account reports the views of only two other speakers who addressed themselves to the question of information and agitation, and both appear to have had some reservations. A party secretary of the Kursk region, T. I. Arkhipova, pointed out that substantial sections of the rural population were still not being reached by other means of political persuasion, and that therefore her own organization attached "great importance" to oral agitation. Moreover, she added, the Kursk agitators were "not only informators but also organizers of socialist competitions."[20] G. A. Bogdanov, party secretary of the Leningrad region, quoted figures from a sociological survey showing that the views of "those who regard oral agitation as obsolete are incorrect," and he, too, pointed out that "political agitation is not only information, although that is a very important part of it; agitation is a form and method by which political ideas are actively carried to the masses."[21]

Signs of Disagreement

It is also significant that a report of the conference published in *Partiinaia zhizn* merely stated that the "question of political agitation in contemporary conditions" had been "raised for discussion," without attributing any particular position to Stepakov. Moreover, the way in which the journal summarized this discussion would seem to indicate that its reporting was not altogether unbiased. After quoting the proviso in the 23rd Congress resolution requiring that all political agitation be based on the dissemination of information, the paper asked what instrumentalities could best ensure this. It went on to say:

The task of informing the population is in considerable measure accomplished with the aid of radio, television [and] newspapers . . . an enormous role belongs to the *lektor* and the *dokladchik*. What place, under these conditions, remains for the agitator? What must be done in order to improve the work of the agit-collectives? The exchange of opinions revealed that the main task is to perfect and skillfully utilize the most varied and practically tested methods of mass political work, to support the most effective of these, to arrange matters so that party organizations may seriously and systematically engage in political agitation.[22]

Particularly worthy of note is the fact that no mention was made of a new type of oral communicator to convey information, and that other media were said to be already accomplishing this task "in considerable measure." Furthermore, with regard to the future of the agit-collectives, the question was not whether to abolish them, but how to improve their work. Rather than experimentation with new forms of ideological work (such as the introduction of informators as suggested by Stepakov), the consensus of the conference was represented as favoring the improved utilization of "practically tested methods."[23]

[19] No. 21, 1966, p. 19.
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[22] No. 21, 1966, p. 17.
[23] *Agitator*, No. 21, 1966, p. 23.

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The supposition that *Partiinaia zhizn's* slanted account of the conference was not just a case of haphazard reporting is supported by an article which had appeared in the preceding issue of the journal, passed for publication on October 18, 1966, while the conference was still in session. Published under the signatures of N. Sviridov, a deputy chief of the Central Committee Propaganda Department, and V. Anisimov, an instructor in that department, the article dealt, curiously enough, with political agitation work in the Volgograd tractor plant, which—as mentioned earlier—had been severely criticized in the press in early 1965. According to the authors, these activities "had come under study" and been found altogether satisfactory. Agitators were helping workers to raise output, to make efficient use of equipment, and to eliminate faulty production and waste ("not a single case of the manufacture of low-grade products goes unnoticed"). Nor did the agitators neglect to "inform the workers about the most important events in the domestic and international life of the country." Visual agitation, too, was "concrete and convincing."[24] All this about a plant where agitational work had been pictured the year before as "either too general . . . or very primitive [and] shallow in its content," and where the head of an agit-collective had himself complained of having trouble getting his agitators to take their work seriously! It seems highly improbable that either the choice of the plant or the timing of the article was coincidental. In any event, its message sharply contradicted not only the views implicit in Stepakov's pronouncements but also the entire campaign of criticism directed at the agitators over two years.

On the other side, an article by Stepakov, said to be based on his report to the October conference, appeared in *Kommunist* in November. Referring again to the 23rd Congress resolution, it called for the introduction of "propagandist-informators" but made no mention of the agitators.[25] The omission in this article of the disparaging remarks which, according to the *Agitator* account, Stepakov had made at the conference concerning the capabilities and future role of agitators may well have been another indication of the controversial nature of the subject.

While the conference was still going on, *Pravda* had briefly reported it on three different dates, but had given no account of the proceedings.[26] This would not have been particularly significant except for the fact that it contrasted sharply with the treatment the same newspaper had given to a similar conference in December 1961 following the previous party congress, when it had published accounts running to tens of thousands of words.[27] Besides its three brief notices about the conference, *Pravda* on October 25 carried an editorial on ideological work, in which—without any reference either to Stepakov's proposals or the views of other conference participants—it merely noted in passing that "in a number of party organizations political information has been assigned to experienced people [who are] very keen on this line of work."

The day before the conference began, *Pravda* had opened its columns to a discussion of "Political Agitation and Life," which was launched with an article by Z. Kruglova, a secretary in the Leningrad municipal party organization. Citing local examples, Kruglova discerned "two different approaches to agitational mass work" among party functionaries, with one group holding that "oral agitation and especially the agitators' talks . . . cannot compete with such powerful tools of ideological influence as the press, radio, television, etc.,"

[24] No. 20, 1966, pp. 50-1.
[25] No. 17, 1966, pp. 23-4.
[26] Oct. 12, 18, and 26, 1966.
[27] *Ibid.*, Dec. 27, 28, and 29, 1961.

—And these fellows will applaud my report.

—*From* Krokodil *(Moscow), No. 25, September 1967.*

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and another group taking the position that "even today the older and tried ideological weapon of our party—agitation by means of the living word—has not lost its role." Kruglova herself was clearly in the second group. Her article, while unsparing in its criticism of the current state of agitation, was an uncompromising reaffirmation of the view that "neither radio, nor television, nor the cinema, nor newspapers . . . can replace . . . the living word of the agitator, reinforced by personal example and directed at the concrete person."

Whether or not the Kruglova article, appearing when it did, was a deliberate attempt to win support among the conference participants for the beleaguered agitators, it was an unmistakable signal that important circles within the party did not share Stepakov's "defeatist" views regarding the agitators' future role. Later contributions to the *Pravda* discussion, published after the conference, took a considerably more reserved view of the usefulness of agitators and, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, endorsed the need for politinformators.[28] By the time the discussion was finally summed up by two *Pravda* journalists in March 1967, it was clear that politinformators had already become a going institution. As the *Pravda* writers put it, "life itself" had called forth "a qualitatively new type of worker conducting political agitation."[29]

Enter the Politinformators

Early in 1967, the party press began reporting the formation of politinformator groups in many parts of the country, and in February *Agitator* started publishing a special subsection for them. Almost all subsequent accounts by local party leaders date the introduction of their own politinformator groups to the beginning of that year.[30] It would appear, therefore, that some sort of central directive must have been issued soon after the October conference. The existence of such a directive is acknowledged in some accounts and denied in others, but it is highly improbable that the more or less simultaneous emergence of politinformators all over the Soviet Union was due solely to the prompting of "life itself" without some fairly explicit instruction from the party's central apparatus.

Whatever form this instruction may have taken, it could not, however, have been very specific regarding the future role of agitators, for the next few years were marked by considerable speculation and confusion on this score. Evidences of this confusion cropped up very early. "I shall say frankly," wrote one agitator in February 1967, "that I do not understand what I, as head of a shop agit-collective, am supposed to do. That we agitate badly I have known for a long time."[31] The authors of the *Pravda* summary referred to above reported that several correspondents had raised the question, "What will become of agitators?" Instead of answering it directly, however, they responded in this roundabout fashion:

> **The answer, it seems, is given in other letters. There is no point, they say, in opposing the politinformator to the agitator. It would be a mistake to mechanically abolish the agit-collectives wthout having selected cadres of politinformators and other workers more qualified than the agitators. The view is also being expressed that, for individual work with people (*e.g.*, with [religious] believers, "difficult" adolescents, etc.) and also in some concrete local situations, the need for the qualified agitator does not diminish.[32]**

Thus, not only was the question attributed to *Pravda's* readers, but the paper had them provide the answer as well. The answer was, in substance, that agitators still had their uses and should not be "mechanically' abolished before a superior substitute became available. Nevertheless, the general tenor of the *Pravda* comment was such as to suggest that agitators were well on the way to Engels' proverbial Museum of Antiquities.

In the context of these developments, mention must also be made of Stepakov's book, *The Scientific Foundations for Party Propaganda*, which was passed for printing on March 13, 1967, just about the time the "Political Agitation and Life" discussion was brought to a close in *Pravda*. The book, after reiterating that the 23rd Congress resolution had "emphasized" the need to base all agitation on information, proceeded to make an even stronger case against agitators than Stepakov had set forth at the October conference, but on the moot question of their future its formulations were noticeably moderate:

[28] Oct. 27, Nov. 15 and 21, 1966; Jan. 26, Feb. 7, 1967.
[29] March 17, 1967.
[30] In addition to the cases already mentioned, several local party leaders were to claim that they had been deploying specialized agitators designated as "politinformators" for several years (see, *e.g.*, *Agitator*, No. 8, 1967, p. 32), but these were clearly exceptions and had not been previously reported in the national press.
[31] *Agitator*, No. 3, 1967, p. 34.
[32] March 17, 1967.

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It goes without saying that the matter is not one of "changing the signboards." There is also no need to dissolve the agit-collectives if, through the carefulness of the party organization, they are correctly selected and really efficient. But wherever agitators are merely listed formally, where the agit-collective does not justify its designation, it is worth reviewing the practice of political agitation, to repudiate that which discredits or belittles it, and at the same time to adopt that [form] which is new, stronger, and more effective than the old.[33]

This newest statement of Stepakov's views was noteworthy for two reasons. First, it presumably reflected the instructions given in the disputed central directive; or if such a directive had either not been issued or (more likely) had not dealt specifically with the future of agitators, it had to be taken by subordinate officials as expressing the thinking of the party leadership. Second, its more moderate approach to the issue of the agitators' future role may conceivably have reflected a compromise forced upon Stepakov either at the October conference or shortly afterwards. In this connection, it should be noted that while Stepakov's November 1966 article in *Kommunist*, refered to earlier, had spoken of "unconstrained heart-to-heart talk in the circle of comrades" as an important instrument of political enlightenment,[34] an otherwise similar passage in his book expanded this phrase to read "unconstrained heart-to-heart talk *by the agitator* in the circle of comrades"[35] (italics added). Whatever the import of this and other differences in substance and tone between Stepakov's earlier statements and those in his book, it is a reasonable assumption that they did not go unnoticed by local party leaders and thus injected a further element of uncertainty into the picture.

Agitators on the Seesaw

The kind of official guidance that was being given to local party organizations at this time can best be illustrated by a glance at the second edition of the *Handbook for Secretaries of Primary Party Organizations* (passed for printing on February 1, 1967). In a subsection re-entitled "New Demands"—instead of "Agit-Collective" as in the first edition of 1964—the second edition acknowledged the need to "analyze the practice of agitation and consider what demands are raised by life and how best to implement them," and it also omitted almost all the favorable references to agitators found in the first edition. Nevertheless, the "new demands" it set forth diverged markedly from those advanced by Stepakov. There was no mention of the 23rd Congress resolution and its proviso for basing all agitation on the dissemination of information, and political information was merely listed as one of the "basic forms of oral agitation." Moreover, whereas Stepakov had called for a new and different kind of information-communicator outside the agit-collective, the second edition of the *Handbook* called for a better agitator within the agit-collective. Finally, notwithstanding all its references to the changing needs of the times, the *Handbook* still pictured the "true agitator" as fulfilling a necessary function:

This is [the function of] a political organizer and worker with the masses (*massovik*). . . . He sees to it that an initiative is supported, that workers' meetings proceed actively, that people visit an interesting exhibition, cinema, or museum. After all, it is not so important what such a political worker is called—agitator, politorganizer or informator. The main thing is to unify the collective and help it to solve its tasks successfully.[36]

Given this description of the agitator, readers of the *Handbook* doubtless had little difficulty in agreeing that the designation of this functionary was indeed a matter of little importance. They may even have asked why a new name was needed at all.

The uncertainty and confusion surrounding the whole question of whether or not the traditional agitator was to be replaced by a more sophisticated and specialized type of information-communicator continued over the next few years. For a time it appeared that a definite changeover was either under way or in the offing. Early in 1967, reports about the work of agitators disappeared almost completely from the press. Some local organizations reported that they were "reviewing" the composition of their agit-collectives and substantially reducing their size[37]; others ceased even mentioning agitators among their ideological workers almost as if they had become unpersons or a non-institu-

[33] *Partiinoi propagande—nauchnie osnovy*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 217, 223-26. See also David Wedgwood Benn, "New Thinking in Soviet Propaganda," *Soviet Studies*, No. 1, 1969, pp. 52 ff., for a perceptive analysis of recent Soviet preoccupations with propaganda methods, based largely on Stepakov's book.

[34] No. 17, 1966, p. 24.

[35] Stepakov, *op. cit.*, p. 224 (emphasis added).

[36] *Spravochnik sekretaria pervichnoi partiinoi organizatsii*, Moscow, 1967, pp. 84-86. *Cf.* the 1964 edition, pp. 100-01.

[37] *Agitator*, No. 1, 1967, p. 34; No. 9, 1967, p. 30; Pravda, June 3 and Aug. 18, 1967.

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tion.[38] Such references to agitators as did appear related for the most part to their past activities and invariably were highly critical.[39] On the other hand, the press was filled with laudatory accounts of the work of newly-established politinformator groups. Everywhere, it appeared, they were being enthusiastically recived as filling a longstanding need.[40] True, some comments suggested that the changeover was often more in name than in substance (*e.g.*, "Yesterday there was an agit-collective—today it is already called a politinformator group"[41]). Nevertheless, even this "changing of the signboards" and the similar renaming of local-level propaganda-service journals from *Bloknot Agitatora* to *Politinformator*[42] seemed to point to the imminent demise of the agit-collectives. Such, at any rate, was the interpretation placed on these developments both in the Soviet Union and by commentators in the West.[43]

Portents of Retreat

Yet, alongside this pattern, a conflicting one began to emerge—not so clear in outline and initially much more muted, but still substantial enough to reveal the continuing uncertainty and disagreement within the party. Not all accounts by local leaders stopped referring to agitators: some persisted in listing them among ideological workers even if they did not describe their activities.[44] Others dealt with mass political work without any reference to the introduction of politinformators. This was notably true of an article on party educational activity by A. Skaba, a secretary of the Ukrainian CP Central Committee, who had been a participant in the October conference.[45] Another example was a *Partiinaia zhizn* editorial entitled "On the Participation of Leading Workers in Mass Political Work":[46] this was a subject bearing directly on the introduction of politinformators; yet they were not so much as mentioned.

These highly conspicuous omissions were not the only indications of behind-the-scenes controversy. When one local party secretary wrote in *Agitator* that a reduction in the number of agitators "is in our view a natural result of the specialization of informator-commentators," and that, in fact, "the agitator as previously constituted is not needed," another replied in a subsequent issue of the same journal that this conclusion was premature, and that there were agitators who "day in and day out conduct important, if not always noticed, work."[47] The latter view was supported by a secretary of the Rostov regional party committee, who wrote that "among our agitators there are a number of active political fighters of the party capable . . . of leading the people behind them. Such agitators are needed by party organizations."[48]

The whole dispute was aired in the pages of *Pravda* on December 25, 1967, with the publication of a letter from a rank-and-file party member in distant Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii. The writer claimed that he had attended various party meetings at which it was asserted, on the basis of "directives," that further progress in ideological work depended "solely on how seriously party committees . . . approach the selection of politinformators." Such assertions had struck him as "simply incomprehensible" at first, but later on, as the press began commenting on the subject, "it became clear that this was not an experiment, but a carefully considered liquidation of the institution of the agitators." The letter went on:

The underestimation of agitators worries many Communists working directly in the localities. Could it be that my alarm is groundless? But already some party organizations have weakened or altogether discontinued work with agitators. Understanding of that assignment is disappearing. Is this permissible?

Before publishing the letter, *Pravda* had passed it on for reply to a Moscow primary party organi-

[38] *Pravda,* Jan. 20, July 11 and 17, 1967; April 6, 1968.
[39] See, *e.g.*, *Agitator,* No. 3, 1967, p. 32; No. 5, 1967, p. 38; No. 7, 1967, p. 36; No. 18, 1967, p. 42; *Partiinaia zhizn,* No. 9, 1967, pp. 30-1; No. 15, 1967, p. 12; *Pravda,* Jan. 26 and June 3, 1967.
[40] See, *e.g.*, *Agitator,* No. 4, 1967, pp. 32-34; No. 10, 1967, pp. 39-41; No. 13, 1967, pp. 52-55; No. 16, 1967, pp. 39-45; *Partiinaia zhizn,* No. 13, 1967, p. 44.
[41] *Pravda,* March 17, 1967; see also *Agitator,* No. 3, 1968, p. 5; No. 14, 1968, p. 47; No. 6, 1969, p. 42; No. 9, 1969, p. 43.
[42] *Agitator,* No. 18, 1967, p. 42; No. 9, 1969, p. 46; No. 12, 1969, p. 44. The fact that the fourth edition of what had hitherto been the *Handbook of the Propagandist and the Agitator* was published in 1968 as *Handbook of the Propagandist* pointed in the same direction.
[43] See B. Meissner, "Die Sowjetunion vor und nach dem 50-Jahr-Jubilaeum II," *Osteuropa,* No. 1, 1969, p. 27; Radio Liberty, *Research Bulletin,* June 7 and Dec. 20, 1967.
[44] See *Agitator,* No. 8, 1967, p. 31; *Partiinaia zhizn,* No. 11, 1967, p. 54; No. 16, 1967, p. 50; No. 19, 1967, pp. 59-60; *Pravda,* July 2 and 18, Aug. 15, 1967.
[45] "Certain Questions of Educational Work in Present Conditions," *Partiinaia zhizn,* No. 4, 1967, pp. 52 ff.
[46] No. 5, 1967, pp. 3 ff.
[47] No. 1, 1967, pp. 34-35; No. 6, 1967, p. 29.
[48] *Partiinaia zhizn,* No. 17, 1967, p. 57.

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zation, and this reply—in the form of a lengthy article by two officials of the Moscow organization—was published along with the letter. It contained the first clearcut indications of a retreat from Stepakov's policy of the wholesale replacement of of agitators by politinformators. The reply stated:

Speaking frankly, we were very troubled by some of the statements in your letter on the liquidation of agitators and their underestimation. . . . Did they really weaken or even "altogether discontinue" work with agitators in your city and region? We consider that the . . . politinformator groups do not at all mechanically replace all old, tried and tested forms of political agitation. Does the politinformator exclude the agitator? Why do you . . . understand it in this way? . . . We began forming politinformator groups in February of this year. But we did not at all think of liquidating or dissolving the agit-collective. Under no circumstances! On the contrary, we sought ways to strengthen it, to improve the work of agitators and render it more effective. Thus, we do not intend "to replace" agitators. And so far as we know, no one has called for this either in the central press or in "directives," as you write.

In other words, it was all an unfortunate and quite inexplicable misunderstanding.

But if there was a misunderstanding, it soon became clear that the *Pravda* article had not done much to alleviate it. In April 1968, T. I. Arkhipova, the Kursk secretary who had seemed to oppose Stepakov at the October conference, complained that local leaders were "particularly worried over how to ensure a clear-cut structure and achieve the sensible coordination of all forces involved in mass political work."[49] In June, the editor of *Agitator*, M. S. Kurianov, acknowledged that "two opposing views" existed in the party regarding these same questions, and he made a somewhat convoluted attempt to reconcile them.[50] One month later, however, a secretary of the Vinnitsa regional committee could still write:

Of course, it would be untrue to assert that all questions regarding the organization and activity of agitators and politinformators have been solved and that everything is clear to everyone. However, the unduly protracted discussions in some places concerning the expediency of the new form of political agitation are, at the least, unfounded. It would be considerably more useful in every respect to occupy oneself properly with questions concerning political information, and this in the widest sense of the word.[51]

Kurianov was drawn into the controversy again in October 1968 when a local party official reported in a letter to *Agitator* that someone he (the local official) had intended to appoint as a politinformator had preferred to remain an agitator because he felt that agitators were "ardent fighters for the party" whereas politinformators were just "competent bookworms" who "regurgitate whatever they've been fed" (*chto vpital to i otdal*). This letter prompted Kurianov to reply with a lengthy defense of politinformators, in the course of which he acknowledged the existence of "bewilderment" and "false rumors" in the party and even went so far as to charge that the issue was being deliberately confused.[52] As late as February 1970, he still found it necessary to complain of "great confusion," with some party officials still doubting the need for politinformators, while others "underestimated the role of agitators and held either that they were "unnecessary altogether or that their role was insignificant." "Such views," wrote Kurianov, ". . . have nothing in common with our party's appreciation of their [the agitators'] role." But whereas he had earlier expresed annoyance at the failure of local leaders to grasp the party's intentions, Kurianov now described their questions as "far from idle" and their confusion as "altogether natural."[53]

Indecision at the Top

What Kurianov failed to mention was that the central leadership itself had been largely responsible for causing the confusion in the first place and had also been remarkably slow in acting to clear it up. It was, in fact, not until April 1969 that an editorial in the central press condemned the neglect of agitators which had accompanied the introduction of politinformators. Until then, editorial comment had given pride of place to the new politinformators and ignored the emergence of "incorrect views" regarding the future role of agitators. Where this latter question had been touched upon at all, as in a *Pravda* editorial of September 4, 1967, the position taken had been precisely one to which Kurianov later took exception—namely, that "the agitator now has a more concrete field of activity—individual work with people." Officials of the Agitprop apparatus had been almost as reticent. After the publication of his book in 1967, Stepakov

[49] *Agitator*, No. 7, p. 45.
[50] *Ibid.*, No. 12, pp. 37-42.
[51] *Ibid.*, No. 14, p. 47.
[52] No. 19, 1968, pp. 50-53.
[53] *Agitator*, No. 3, 1970, p. 50.

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himself said nothing more in print on the subject, and although the head of the Agitation Section, Morozov, also published a brochure in 1967, he merely repeated Stepakov's arguments in favor of politinformators almost word for word and strongly criticized the work of agitators.[54] Of the other senior officials of the Central Committee Propaganda Department, only A. Dmitriuk, one of the deputy chairmen, took up the question of the agitators' future role. Dmitriuk explicitly acknowledged the confusion in the party, but like the *Pravda* editorial mentioned above, his article took the line that agitators still had a "very important and necessary" function to fulfill in the realm of "individual work."[55]

Throughout the period following the large-scale introduction of politinformators, it was Kurianov who acted as chief troubleshooter for the Agitprop establishment. Between 1967 and early 1970, he published seven articles on the subject of mass political work, and in five of these he touched upon the vexing problem of what was to become of the agitators. His equivocal and constantly changing formulations, which contributed in no small measure to the perplexity of the local cadres, mirrored the indecision of the Agitprop leadership, but above all they reflected a gradual retreat from the 1967 official policy of progressively reducing and ultimately liquidating the function of agitators back toward their full rehabilitation as a vital and coequal link in the system of political communication alongside the politinformators.

Backtracking by Stages

Characteristically, the retreat was carried out in the same creeping fashion that had marked the original advance. There was no sudden and clear-cut reversal; instead, official policy appeared to backtrack by stages. It is difficult to trace the beginning of this process with any certainty. It may have begun as early as December 1967, when *Pravda*—as mentioned earlier—gave prominence to the letter of the party member from Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskii expressing concern over the "carefully considered liquidation" of agitators, along with the reply of two Moscow primary party officials that no such liquidation was intended. It was manifestly under way during 1968, when remarks critical of the work of politinformators and sympathetic towards agitators increasingly found their way into the central press.[56] In June of that year, Kurianov wrote approvingly that many party organizations which had instituted politinformators still "retained their agit-collectives." He continued to insist that politinformators "occupy the leading place in the system of agitation," that they represent the "higher form" and agitators the "lower form," but he nevertheless brought himself around to an admission that "the agit-collective is essential."[57] The first positive account of the work of agitators to come out in a long while appeared in *Pravda* on September 6, 1968: one of two lengthy articles reporting on mass political work in a Sverdlovsk plant was headlined "Agitators" and provided clear evidence that these functionaries were still very much in business.

In the spring of 1969, *Agitator* also shifted course in the same direction. An article published in a March issue argued that agitators and politinformators complemented each other and constituted a "single ideological collective." Moreover, the following issue of the same journal for the first time published an editorial condemning "the feeling . . . that agitators are now unnecessary," adding that "although the party press has explained the incorrectness of this point of view, it still exists here and there."[58] Kurianov himself, writing in *Pravda* on May 21, explicitly stated that "the agit-collectives will not be eliminated. . . . They will continue to play a large role. They should be strengthened and improved." Moreover, he no longer insisted that politinformators were beings of a higher order, but instead criticized the fact that "some party organizations today observe a peculiar kind of separation of roles: the agit-collectives are assigned only to agitation work, and the politinformators are assigned only to information work."

The culmination of the policy reversal finally came in July with the publication in *Agitator* of an editorial entitled "The Agitator—Active Fighter for the Party," which was unmistakably intended to

[54] *Massovo-politicheskaia rabota partiinykh organizatsii*, Moscow,1967, pp. 28-29.
[55] *Agitator*, No. 6, 1968, pp. 21-2.
[56] *Ibid.*, No. 11, 1968, p. 47; No. 13, 1968, p. 53; No. 18, 1968, p. 34; No. 24, 1968, p. 36; *Partiinaia zhizn*, No. 2, 1968, p. 51.
[57] *Agitator*, No. 12, 1968, pp. 38, 40-41. In an earlier article, in September 1967, Kurianov was already referring to politinformators as "the leading force in mass political work" and had placed current developments in the context of a dialectical movement from lower to higher forms, thus implying that the latter was due to replace the former (*ibid.*, No. 17, 1967, pp. 31, 33).
[58] No. 6, p. 40, and No. 7, p. 4.

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signal the complete rehabilitation of agitators. Characteristically, it started out by invoking the name of Lenin to legitimate the new policy line. Recalling a note which Lenin wrote to Sverdlov in November 1917 recommending someone for agitation work in Petrograd, the editorial spelled out the moral of the story—namely, that Lenin, even at a time when he was heavily preoccupied with many pressing problems, had concerned himself with the assignment of a single agitator. This example, declared *Agitator*,

shows what significance Vladimir Ilich attached to militant organizational activity among the masses. . . . Our party has always valued the agitator cadres in a Leninist manner and held high the calling of the agitator.

The editorial went on to note that since the appearance of politinformators some party organizations had tended to neglect agitators and "here and there" had even "abolished the agit-collective altogether." This, it declared, does "serious harm" and is "impermissible"; agitators and politinformators "solve one and the same task, pursue one and the same aim." [59]

Effect and Causes

While the consequences of the integration of politinformators into the system of political communication fall outside the scope of this article, a few general observations may be in order. For one thing, published examples of what were presumably meant to be model politinformator talks [60] do not strike one as particularly skillful exercises in oral persuasion: for the most part, they are lifeless repetitions of *Pravda* editorials or official pronouncements without a spark of originality in either style or content. That this is not an unduly harsh judgment is supported by increasing Soviet criticisms of the work of politinformators, couched in terms reminiscent of the earlier criticisms directed at the agitators.[61] Moreover, even if the caliber of some individual politinformators' performance is higher than these criticisms seem to indicate, they, as an institution, are likely to play a limited role in supplementing the influence of the mass media quantitatively rather than strengthening it qualitatively.

In view of the inconclusive outcome of the protracted controversy in the Soviet Union over the respective merits of agitators and politinformators, one may well ask why the whole issue was raised in the first place. The answer, or at least part of it, could conceivably lie in the impact of modern communications research. Even the relatively few surveys in this field whose findings have so far been published in the Soviet Union [62] must have brought home to the leadership that Soviet propaganda audiences reflect the same phenomena of selective exposure—and presumably of selective perception and retention as well—which frustrate the efforts of communicators in other lands. A campaign to supplement the mass media by intensified face-to-face communication of the kind intended to be provided by the politinformators would be a characteristic and almost predictable Soviet response to such findings.

To be more specific, empirical research must have done much to dispel the long-cherished notion of the agitator as the political guide of his collective. For example, a party-conducted survey of 250 members of various collective groups in three cities showed that only 6.4 percent turned to their agitators with questions on political problems, as compared with 10 percent who turned to their task leaders, 36 percent to party secretaries, 42.4 percent to propagandists, and 51.2 percent to fellow workers or friends.[63] To anyone who had followed the activities of agitators at all closely, even through the distorting lens of the Soviet press, this may not have been a very startling finding; nevertheless, it did point up the hollowness of the official claims of the past regarding the agitators' key role, such as Kurianov's statement, made as late as 1965, that a "person listening to the radio, watching television, or reading an article wishes to talk matters over, to exchange views. Naturally he turns to the agitator." [64] Now, there was hard "scientific evidence that people did not, in fact, turn "naturally" to the agitator. By exposing the marginal contribution of the agitators as opinion leaders, such studies

[59] No. 14, 1969, pp. 3-6.
[60] *Agitator*, No. 8, 1968, pp. 41-43; No. 9, 1968, pp. 43-45; No. 13, 1968, pp. 54-56; No. 17, 1968, pp. 45-48; No. 12, 1969, pp. 35-37, No. 14, 1969, pp. 51-52.
[61] See No. 2, 1969, p. 46; No. 5, 1969, p. 47; No. 7, 1969, p. 51; No. 20, 1969, p. 38; *Pravda*, Jan. 30, Feb. 24, March 5, 1969; *Kommunist*, No. 15, 1969, p. 49; *Partiinaia zhizn*, No. 1, 1969, p. 42.
[62] See, *e.g.*, *Zhurnalist*, No. 8, 1967, pp. 44-45, No. 12, 1967, pp. 42-45; No. 2, 1968, pp. 23-25; No. 7, 1968, pp. 46-47; No. 8, 1968, pp. 60-62; No. 10, 1969, pp. 34-37.
[63] A. G. Efimov and P. V. Pozdniakov, *Nauchnie osnovy partiinoi propagandy*, Moscow, 1966, pp. 99-100.
[64] *Kommunist*, No. 10, 1965, pp. 45-46.

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could well have prompted the move in 1967 to replace them with politinformators. But even if they only added force to the arguments of those who pressed for the agitators' abolition on other grounds, they remain notable as one of the few cases in the Soviet Union in which the findings of social research appear to have coincided with policy initiatives.

Political Significance

More pertinent to the present discussion would be an attempt to identify the political forces involved in the controversy. A case could be made to show that certain local organizations opposed the abolition of agitators more than others, or that the line of *Partiinaia zhizn* differed markedly from that of *Agitator*, but this would hardly be very enlightening unless these divergences could be related to current rivalries within the party leadership as well as to the broader issues of Soviet politics. Unfortunately, the evidence is too sparse to permit more than speculation on either score. None of the top party leaders (*i.e.*, members of the Politburo or the Central Committee Secretariat) took a public stand on the issue of politinformators *vs.* agitators, nor did the debate at any time go beyond the realm of "technical" agitprop arguments. This is not to say that the controversy had no high-level political repercussions: Stepakov must have had friends in the party's inner circle, and the defeat of an initiative with which he was so prominently associated may be presumed to have affected more then just his own personal standing and influence.[65] Still less does it mean that the issue was without wider implications for the political system as a whole. Soviet agitators have always been "organizers" rather than mere communicators. Their abolition would have deprived the regime of an important instrument of social control and, conversely, would have freed Soviet citizens from one of the forms of petty supervision which have long been an obnoxious feature of Soviet life.

Resisting the temptation to speculate further afield, one may state that the whole process involving the introduction of politinformators and the abortive drive against agitators constitutes a limited but instructive lesson in the political style of the post-Khrushchev leadership. This kind of decision-making by trial and error, with apparent vacillation at the top and manifest confusion below—with more or less tentative policy initiatives, variously disguised, meeting with more or less determined opposition, similarly disguised—is an altogether new phenomenon in the history of the Soviet Agitprop. In other areas of Soviet politics, the continued validity of the monolithic totalitarian model has repeatedly been disproved by the regime's obvious need to include a variety of expert groups in the decision-making process if it is to successfully govern a complex society. In economic planning, in military affairs, in legal and educational reforms, to name but a few areas, experts representing different groups (some have called them "interest groups") have been able to advance conflicting views in public until the political leadership came out in favor of one or the other, or adopted an intermediary position. Not so, however, in Agitprop. This has always been the party's exclusive preserve: there are no agitprop experts outside the party apparatus. It is unprecedented for the professional manipulators of unanimity to be other than unanimous themselves in regard to the tools and techniques of their profession. Here, until 1967, the record had consistently been one of firm and unchallenged decisions taken at the center and faithfully obeyed throughout the hierarchy. Never before had agitprop matters been left to "life, experience, practice." In the Soviet lexicon, this means leaving them to drift (*samotiok*), which is high on the scale of bureaucratic evils.

If the issue of the politinformator *vs.* the agitator was allowed to drift, as it most assuredly was, the reason was perhaps precisely that it involved one of the party's chief *raisons d'etre* and therefore could not be opened to the intrusion of outsiders and their expertise. Consequently, the party could not play here its by now accustomed and far easier role of arbiter between conflicting outside interests, finding itself faced instead with conflicting pressure groups within its own ranks. The choice before the party leaders was either to resolve the issue by coming out for one of the contending groups (whether pro-agitator or pro-politinformator) or to avoid a decision and preserve intraparty peace—at least on this issue. Stalin certainly, and Khrushchev probably, would have chosen the first option. That the present Soviet leadership took the second—even at the cost of blocking the decision-making process in agitprop affairs—gives this case study a significance extending beyond its particular subject matter.

[65] At the time of his appointment as head of the Agitprop apparatus, Stepakov was thought to be a supporter of Kosygin (Radio Liberty, *Daily Information Bulletin*, August 3, 1965).

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Bulgarian Economic Reform—Advance and Retreat

By L. A. D. Dellin

Although relatively little has been written about it in the West, especially recently, Bulgaria, too—like practically all the other Communist states of Eastern Europe—has been embarked on the path of economic reform during the 1960's.[1] Indeed, when the Bulgarian reform blueprint was first spelled out officially at the end of 1965 after a protracted period of preliminary discussion and experimentation, it was optimistically viewed by some Western analysts as heralding a more substantial move away from the Soviet model of a centralized, command economy—at least in certain key respects (notably, planning decentralization and pricing reform)—than was envisaged in the reform plans of some other East European Communist regimes. Actually, as further systematized and elaborated in 1966 and 1967, the blueprint turned out to be less "advanced" than it had appeared to be at first, but its direction was nevertheless still forward—that is, away from Stalinist-type centralized planning and controls. In 1968, however, there was a clear-cut reversal of direction. While still referring to the "new system of management" evolved in the preceding years, the regime in fact altered the pre-1968 blueprint so drastically as to virtually replace it with a new one strengthening some of the very features which the regime had earlier set out to downgrade.

In a very real sense, therefore, it is appropriate to survey the zigzag course of Bulgarian economic reform in terms of two distinct blueprints rather than just one, with 1968 marking the dividing line between them. In the following pages, the salient features of the pre-1968 blueprint will first be analyzed, principally on the basis of the three major official documents which shaped it: (1) the "Draft

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[1] The present article is a revised and updated version of a paper presented at an international symposium on economic reforms in Eastern Europe held in October 1969 under the auspices of the Studiengesellschaft für Fragen mittel- und osteuropäischer Partnerschaft, in Bonn. The original paper will be included in a volume entitled *Osteuropa—Wirtschaftsreformen* (Eastern Europe—Economic Reforms), edited by Hermann Gross, to be published shortly by Edition Atlantic Forum, Bonn.

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Theses" of December 1965,[2] in which the proposed reforms were first outlined in systematic fashion; (2) the decisions of the April 1966 Plenum of the Bulgarian Communist Party (BCP) Central Committee,[3] which adopted the Theses; and (3) the joint party-state decree of November 1967 on "increased profitability of the economy,"[4] which further detailed and elaborated the "new system." The major changes introduced by the drastically revamped 1968 blueprint will then be delineated, mainly on the basis of the decisions of the July 1968 Plenum of the BCP Central Committee[5] and the government decree of November 6, 1968, on the "gradual application and further development of the new system of management."[6] (These sources will hereafter be referred to in abbreviated form without further footnote documentation.) Finally, there will be a concluding overall assessment of the current status of, and the prospects for, the Bulgarian reforms.

The Pre-1968 Blueprint

The "New System of Planning and Management of the National Economy" outlined in the December 1965 Theses was intended to cope with an array of interrelated problems characteristic of a Soviet-type command economy. These were broadly identified as excessive centralization of planning and direction, the stifling of enterprise autonomy and efficiency, deficiencies in motivation and material incentives, arbitrariness in price formation, and the general inadequacy of existing criteria of success for the purpose of measuring enterprise performance and spurring production units to supply desired output. Let us proceed, then, to examine the proposed remedies and their implementation—or lack of it—prior to 1968, in a number of specific areas: planning in general, the role of the enterprise, capital investments, wages, taxing, pricing, agriculture and foreign trade.

Planning: Despite occasional hints and some isolated statements to the contrary, the institution and role of central planning were never seriously questioned, nor was "decentralization," as opposed to central planning, considered an official desideratum. In this respect, the Theses went farthest in their "liberalizing" provisions ("improved planning from below" and reduction of the number of obligatory indices), but even they—and, still more so, the decisions of the April 1966 Plenum which approved them—made it clear that "planning is a necessity" and that "the elimination of centralized management would be contrary to the socialist order." The avowed goal of the regime was a limited one: namely, to "combine centralism with increased independence for the enterprise" (Theses) so as to allow for greater flexibility.

The reference in the Theses to "improved planning from below," taken by itself, sounded as if it foreshadowed a significant decentralization of planning, inasmuch as it could have been interpreted to mean that great weight would be given in the formulation of the overall economic plan to the "contractual obligations" of individual enterprises, *i.e.*, to the terms of the contracts negotiated directly, and presumably freely, between individual enterprises—since outright plan assignments to enterprises were to be abolished.[7] Yet this was not the case, since the Theses themselves specified that the planning from below was to be based on "improved coordination, regulation, and guidance on the part of central planning." The enterprises' supposed freedom to contract thus became a largely meaningless postulate, especially when the April 1966 Plenum required them to meet "state orders" (*durzhavni poruchki*)—hardly any different from full-fledged plan assignments—for items of "decisive importance." The Plenum also imposed a series of obligatory ceilings and norms and made most contracts subject to approval from

[2] "Draft Theses of the Politburo of the Bulgarian Communist Party on the New System of Planning and Management of the National Economy" (hereafter abbreviated as Theses), *Rabotnichesko Delo* (Sofia), Dec. 4, 1965.

[3] "Plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party: Report and Decisions" (hereafter, April 1966 Plenum), *ibid.*, April 29, 1966.

[4] "Decree of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bulgaria on Increased Profitability of the Economy," (hereafter, Decree on Profitability), *Durzhaven Vestnik* (Sofia), Nov. 10, 1967.

[5] "Plenum of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, July 24–26, 1968: Report Discussions and Decisions" (hereafter, July 1968 Plenum), *Rabotnichesko Delo*, July 25–27, 1968.

[6] "Decree No. 50 of the Council of Ministers, November 6, 1968, on the Gradual Application and Further Development of the New System of Management of the National Economy" (hereafter, November 1968 Decree), *Durzhaven Vestnik*, Nov. 15, 1968.

[7] Under the contract system envisaged in the Theses, enterprises were to be permitted to plan their own production targets and submit them to the appropriate trust (and ultimately the central authority) for approval. Veto by the center, however, was meant to be exceptional.

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above, which in effect left the enterprise free to plan production only of items of minor importance. Symptomatically perhaps, the Plenum made no further reference to "planning from below," and the words "of planning" were dropped from the official designation of the "new system" in 1966.

Another planning reform affected the number of centrally-determined compulsory indices. The Theses specifically mentioned such indices only for the "volume of basic commodity production in real [physical] terms," "limits [obligatory ceilings] on capital investments," "limits on basic raw and other materials," and "limits on foreign exchange." If this meant that compulsory indices would be limited to just these four categories, it would have shown the leadership's intention to move away from detailed central planning and direction—even though the retention of the notorious index for "volume of basic production in physical terms" would then have indicated, in the most charitable interpretation, an incomplete understanding of the centralizing tendencies inherent in the use of that index. However, the evidence indicates that there was no such intention. For instance, G. Filipov, then Deputy Chairman of the State Planning Committee, had already indicated in 1964 that many more than the four indices just mentioned would continue to be centrally determined, including quality and assortment as well as product and factor prices,[8] and B. Minkovski, editor of the foreign trade magazine *Vunshna Turgoviya*, had intimated that central planning "will even be increased, without in any way relaxing the state management of the economy." [9] At the Ninth Party Congress almost a full year after the Theses had been made public, Premier and party First Secretary Todor Zhivkov himself admitted that "no new methods of planning have yet been worked out."[10]

All this leaves the impression that the Bulgarian economy, the 1965 reform blueprint notwithstanding, remained essentially a centralized, command economy. What seemed like a move toward decentralization was actually a mere reshuffling of the chain of command whereby increased reliance was placed on the "branch principle" and on the previously-established trusts (*stopanski obedineniia*), which were to serve as intermediary bodies between the branch ministries and the enterprises under their jurisdiction. However, the trusts, which Zhivkov described at the Ninth Party Congress as "basic forms of efficient economic management," [11] gave rise to problems of monopolization and conflict with other decision-making bodies—problems that could not remain unnoticed. With regard to the former, the regime vacillated between threats of countermeasures against "negative monopolistic trends" (April 1966 Plenum) and rationalizations that monopolies under socialism "do not have the same disadvantages as under capitalism" (Ninth Congress). Meanwhile, jurisdictional conflicts led to repeated and often contradictory attempts to delineate areas of competence, with the regime first enlarging the rights of the branch ministries (April 1966 Plenum) and a year later those of the trusts[12]—but hardly ever those of the individual enterprise. As late as 1967, the trusts were still being characterized as "powerful agencies of state management," [13] and any meaningful planning autonomy for the enterprise was still lacking.

Role of the Enterprise: Given the retention of a substantial degree of centralized planning and direction of the economy, the principles of enterprise autonomy, self-support, profit-seeking, and democratization proclaimed in the Theses as desiderata of the "new system" needed greater backing both in theory and in practice than they actually received if they were to bring about the expected benefits of greater economic efficiency.

The Theses charged the individual enterprise with "producing net income for itself and for the state," thus making profitability (the ratio of profit to total capital) the general criterion of economic success. However, the enterprise was supposed to achieve this task on the basis of minimal freedom to enter into contractual agreements; it was permitted to manipulate only the prices of obviously minor production items; and it was compelled to relate premium payments to workers, above a guaranteed wage, to its profits after subtracting taxes and mandatory contributions to several enterprise funds. In addition, it was burdened with obtaining more, and possibly all, of its own investment funds out of profits and bank loans. This was at best a difficult assignment to accomplish within

[8] Cited by F. Barbieri in *Politika* (Belgade), Oct. 15 and 18, 1964 (translated in Radio Free Europe Research *Bulgarian Press Survey*, No. 552).

[9] *Vunchna Turgoviya* (Sofia), December 1964.

[10] Proceedings of the Ninth Congress, reported in *Rabotnichesko Delo*, Nov. 14–20, 1966.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] D. Davidov, Deputy Chairman of the Labor and Wage Committee, writing in *Trud* (Sofia), Oct. 7, 1967.

[13] *Ibid.*

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the constraints of the existing pricing and allocation system. In fact, "self-support" most probably remained a desideratum. From available indications, it appears to have met with some success in agriculture—assuming that collective farm income was correctly reported—but "planned losses" and subsidies continued in industry.[14]

Before going on to discuss some of the more specific aspects of the reforms as they affected the industrial enterprise, mention should be made of the "production committees" which had previously been established in industry as a step toward the regime's announced "democratization" of enterprise management.[15] The 1965 Theses entrusted these elective bodies with participation in some hitherto precluded areas, such as the "correct distribution of profits" and "the selection of managing cadres," but the committees were hardly meant to impair the decision-making power of the enterprise director. As Deputy Chairman Filipov of the State Planning Committee emphasized in 1964, the director remained the "representative of the state" in the enterprise, and the enterprises were "state property and did not belong to the workers' collective."[16] Moreover, workers' representatives made up only half the membership of the production committees' executive organs, the other half consisting of the director, the trade union chairman, the party secretary, and other *ex officio* members. The April 1966 Plenum ruled that decisions by the production committees were to be binding "if not contrary to the law," but it failed to redefine the areas of their competence. In any event, the committees remained merely advisory bodies rather than becoming real organs of worker participation in managerial decision-making.

Investments: A consistent theme of the reforms was the substitution of internal and credit financing of enterprise capital investments in place of the old system of state allocations of free capital. To this end, each individual enterprise was required to build up its own "expansion and technical improvement fund," the size of which was to be determined by a formula based on a percentage of existing enterprise capital, depreciation, and profits, to be deposited in the State Bank at interest. The formula varied for different branches of industry and tended to favor enterprises in the high-priority sectors. Bank loans to enterprises were to be repayable and interest-bearing, with highly differentiated rates of interest inversely related to the success of the enterprise—the higher the profitability, the lower the interest charge.[17] While designed to reward profitable enterprises, this provision tended to discourage bank borrowing by less successful enterprises, thus running counter to one of the goals of the regime. The 1967 Decree on Profitability also introduced some interesting competitive features in enterprise borrowing and repayment of bank loans—particularly, a provision permitting consumer goods producers to repay part of their bank loans used for the purchase of new equipment out of turnover tax assessments on the goods produced by that equipment. These features were intended to stimulate profit-seeking and consumer goods production.

But most investment projects were to remain centrally determined because of the still large investment needs of the state.[18] Moreover, the state was to continue to finance investments in priority sectors, especially in heavy industry where most of the unprofitable enterprises were to be found, thus eschewing the quest for internal or credit financing and profitability. In fact, as late as 1967, only 10 percent of total capital investments was reported to be financed by bank loans, although the "new economic system," according to the Decree on Profitability, had been applied to 70 percent of industry.

To provide greater incentive for efficient capital utilization, enterprises were permitted to retain a larger percentage of their depreciation allowances than before, and were required at the same time to pay a 6-percent interest charge on both fixed and working capital. However, the absence of any specification as to the method of capital valuation created problems, especially in view of the still prevalent practice of undervaluing capital and thus favoring the capital-intensive branches of industry. In sum, the pre-1968 reform blueprint, insofar as it related to capital formation and use, tended to remedy some of the most obvious obstacles to economic efficiency, but it still left enough

[14] G. Filipov, in *Novo Vreme* (Sofia), October 1968.

[15] The production committees were initially established by the May 1963 Central Committee Plenum (see *Rabotnichesko Delo*, May 19, 1963). "Temporary Rules on the Composition and Functions of the Production Committees" were approved on April 15, 1965 (see *Partien Zhivot* [Sofia], No. 7, 1965).

[16] *Loc. cit. supra* (fn. 8).

[17] November 1967 Decree on Profitability; also, statement by State Bank Director K. Nestorov, Radio Sofia, Nov. 22, 1967 (cited in Radio Free Europe Research Report, *Bulgaria*, Dec. 12, 1967).

[18] Filipov, *loc. cit. supra* (fn. 8).

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—sometimes counterproductive—"levers" in the hands of the state to confront the enterprise with complex and difficult problems to overcome if it was to be profitable, let alone increase wages.

Wages: A significant innovation of the reforms was the scheme outlined in the Theses for tying part of wages and salaries to the profitability of the enterprise so as to stimulate "material interest." The enterprise "wage fund," consisting of the residual after subtracting non-labor costs, taxes, and internal fund allocations from receipts, was to be used, first, for the payment of basic wages conforming "on the average" to centrally-determined "guaranteed" wage scales, but not below a prescribed minimum (fixed relatively higher for workers than for employees), and second, for supplementary payments to workers and employees based on both collective and individual performance, including length of service. A "wage fund reserve," fixed as a percentage of the wage fund proper, was to serve as an emergency source for meeting minimum wages. These provisions of the Theses were, however, restricted to some extent by the April 1966 Plenum and considerably modified by the 1967 Decree on Profitability. The latter, in particular, stressed the need for a changeover to hourly wages (to be based on "machine-hours" in mechanized industries) and for the introduction of "multifactoral" (*mnogofaktorni*) wage criteria—*i.e.*, quality of product, profitability, efficient use of capital, savings, labor discipline, and length of service. Of these criteria, the enterprise was supposed to have the right to select and apply those most appropriate to its particular line of production.[19] (Actually, the choice of criteria continued to be determined by higher authority, such as the economic trusts and the Labor and Wage Committee.) At the same time, the decree called for a wholesale revision of production standards and labor norms, as well as for salary cuts in cases of unsuccessful management, and for tighter rules tying enterprise wage funds to performance.

Considering that simple piece-rates were still in effect for about half of the country's industrial workers,[20] there was much to be said for the general application of hourly wages, as well as for an adjustment of labor norms and the adoption of more comprehensive wage-determining criteria. However, the regime's attempt to move simultaneously in diverse directions without any clarity of method only served to render the entire wage system more complicated and arbitrary, if not downright chaotic. Moreover, the earlier revisions of labor norms had usually been at the expense of the workers' income, and the tying of wages to the productivity of enterprise capital introduced a factor extraneous to the workers' personal effort, which might operate to stifle rather than encourage labor initiative. It should be recalled that at the time the Decree on Profitability was enacted, machines were being used in Bulgarian industry "at a bare 45–50 percent of capacity," according to Labor and Wage Committee Chairman M. Mishev.[21] Seen in that light, the decree's provisions appear to reflect more of a haphazard attempt to deal with multiple problems than a well thought-out and viable set of solutions.

Taxes: The reforms in the tax system were also supposedly designed to stimulate profitability, but in fact they tended to dampen material incentives. As the major source of state revenue, the 1965 Theses provided for still more sharply differentiated turnover taxes than already existed, as well as for a tax (really interest) on enterprise total capital. The most novel feature, however, was a "progressive income [profits] tax" on enterprises, which had the contradictory aims of promoting incentive and at the same time controlling undue increases in profits and wages. At the April 1966 Plenum, Premier Zhivkov admitted the self-defeating nature of this tax and called for its modification so as to combine progressive with proportional rates and to limit its application to enterprise net income.

Prices: The 1965 reform blueprint took what seemed to be a relatively promising approach to the crux of any meaningful economic reform—revision of the pricing system. After affirming the general principle that prices should be brought closer to "socially necessary labor costs" and made more flexible, the Theses called for the establishment of three different categories of prices: (1) those which the state would continue to set at fixed levels (primarily for capital goods and consumer

[19] According to Deputy Chairman A. Chaushev of the Labor and Wage Committee, an enterprise would have to apply at least one or two of the criteria. See *Otechestven Front* (Sofia), Nov. 11, 1967.

[20] Chaushev statement, *ibid.*

[21] *Trud*, Oct. 31, 1967

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necessities); (2) those for which the state would set only minimum and maximum limits between which prices could vary (applicable to most remaining goods produced under contracts between individual enterprises); and (3) those to be left free to fluctuate according to market conditions (presumably affecting seasonal and local items).

This hopeful start was belied, however, by repeated postponements of action to implement the price reform and by the introduction of various qualifications to the original blueprint. Even the Theses themselves contained a somewhat contradictory proviso that prices should be set in accordance with average industry costs (rather than actual enterprise costs), and in October 1967 S. Dulbokov, chief of the party's Planning and Finance Department, stated that "prices should not diverge from the interests of the state."[22] The April 1966 Plenum and the 1967 Decree on Profitability both reiterated the promise of price reform, stressing the need for realistic and flexible prices and for a greater differentiation of factory and retail prices. Nevertheless, less and less was heard about the proposed "maximum-minimum limit" and free-market price categories envisaged in the Theses, and evidence strongly suggests that the old price system remained largely unchanged.

Agriculture and Foreign Trade: Substantial reforms had already been instituted in the sagging agicultural sector of the economy prior to the 1965 Theses. Although space does not permit detailed discussion of these measures, suffice it to note that they included a number of steps to bolster incentives in agriculture—*e.g.*, establishment of guaranteed minimum wages for collective farmers, pensions, production premiums, and encouragement of private plots—to which the Theses added the concept of differential land rents. The "new system" in agriculture further aimed at some reduction of centrally-determined compulsory production indices (which nevertheless remained substantial) and at tying collective farmers' incomes more closely to production results by relying on piecework rates (*akord*) as the basis for individual remuneration. (Collective farm chairmen and other salaried employees were to have only 70 percent of their salary guaranteed.[23]) Subsequent to the reforms referred to above, there were some contradictory attempts to narrow the gap between the agricultural collectives on the one hand and industry (and the state farms) on the other through the establishment of various collective-farm funds which tended to infringe upon the legal autonomy of the collectives, elimination of the theoretical claim to rent payments, and the imposition of limitations on the size and use of private plots under the new collective-farm Model Statute of March 1967.[24]

Finally, the reforms barely touched on matters involving foreign trade except for an announced revision of customs duties, a vague reference to the possibility of direct contacts between Bulgarian economic trusts and foreign enterprises "if necessary" and subject to central government control, and repeated exhortations to producers to make exports more competitive in international markets. Generally speaking, in this area, state monopoly and rigid command were to remain the rule.

In sum, the Bulgarian blueprint of economic reform as it evolved up until 1968 was a conglomerate of some worthwhile remedies, some questionable and contradictory measures, and a patchwork of undertakings aimed at improving, if not at radically altering, the existing system of centralized economic planning and command. Although deeds often did not jibe with words and implementation of the reforms was slow and piecemeal, there nevertheless seemed to be a continuing, albeit hesitant, thrust forward through 1967, and the pronouncements of the regime remained, on balance, in favor of applying the already toned-down version of the original 1965 blueprint sooner or later.

The 1968 Reversal

In 1968, however, the blueprint itself was so drastically altered that, in effect, it no longer called for advance, but instead for retreat. The reversal was signaled by the decisions of the July 1968 Central Committee Plenum and confirmed by the ironically-titled "Decree on the Gradual Application and Further Development of the New System of Management of the Economy" of November 1968, which set January 1, 1969, as the dead-

22 *Rabotnichesko Delo*, Oct. 31, 1967.

23 Statement by Deputy Chairman S. Syulemezov of the State Planning Committee, in *Kooperativno Delo* (Sofia), Dec. 5, 1965.

24 The Model Statute was approved by the Congress of Cooperative Labor Farms, March 28–30, 1967. For full text, see *Durzhaven Vestnik*, Feb. 28, 1968.

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line for total implementation of the "new" (read: modified) system. While several provisions of the pre-1968 blueprint were left unchanged, the overall purport of the Plenum decisions and the decree was a decisive swing back toward the very system which the 1965 Theses had tried to reform. What motivated the reversal is hard to pinpoint, but it seems reasonable to speculate that the move may have been prompted in part by the regime's realization, in the light of the 1968 events in Czechoslovakia, that unduly liberalizing economic reforms might tend to undermine the political monopoly of the Communist Party and jeopardize Bulgaria's smooth relations with Moscow.

Whatever the explanation, the July 1968 Plenum, under the equivocal guise of perfecting the "new system," opted instead for a restrengthening of central planning and direction of the economy. Premier Zhivkov openly repudiated the 1965 concept of "planning from below" on the grounds that individual units "cannot have a comprehensive view of the economy" and that the "scientific-technological revolution" necessitated recentralization.[25] Filipov, who had in the meantime been promoted to the post of chairman of the "Permanent Commission on the New System," endorsed the Plenum's reversal of policy in an October 1968 statement reaffirming "the need for increased [central] planning as society develops."[26]

The decision to recentralize planning was reflected in the restoration of a full complement of centrally-determined compulsory indices, limits, and norms. In addition to the four compulsory indices specified in the Theses, the July Plenum included the volume of basic contract deliveries between enterprises, the maximum size of enterprise wage funds, basic technical assignments, and norms for internal enterprise funds, interest, taxes, and customs duties, among the items subject to central determination. The overall effect of these extensions was to render the distinction between state "orders" and the supposedly voluntary "contractual" obligations of enterprises even more tenuous than before, and to all but nullify the circumscribed autonomy still remaining to the individual enterprise.

Recentralization was also implicit in certain organizational changes decided upon by the Plenum. A new Committee on Economic Coordination was established within the Council of Ministers and vested with broad powers to coordinate "planning from above," with a corresponding reduction in the powers of the intermediate-level economic trusts. Also, since most contracts would henceforth be centrally determined for all practical purposes, it was decided to reestablish a Ministry of Supplies and State Reserves (which had existed once before, between 1953 and 1956) to be in charge of inter-industry supplies. In an attempt to keep this renewed centralism from appearing excessive, the Plenum promised that the people's councils (governing bodies at regional, district and local levels) would be given a greater say regarding economic activities within their areas of jurisdiction, and also reiterated that both the economic trusts and individual enterprises would enjoy "greater independence." In fact, however, the recentralization of economic planning and direction meant that the role of the people's councils, as well as of the trusts and enterprises, would henceforth affect merely the implementation, not the formulation, of central economic decisions.

On the crucial issue of price reform, the July Plenum reiterated that rationality and flexibility in pricing remained worthwhile goals, but it conspicuously failed to make any mention of the three-level price system projected in the 1965 Theses. Nor was any encouragement to be found in an October 1968 statement by Chairman Filipov of the Permanent Commission on the New System, who categorically declared that "the movement of prices will be centrally planned in the future."[27] There were, however, some moves to establish more rational prices in certain areas. In October, T. Vulchev, Chief of the Planning and Economics Department of the Ministry of Machine Building, announced a 17-percent increase in wholesale prices for the machine-building industry and a 34.1-percent increase for the electrical industry.[28] In November the government also confirmed a long-promised, more comprehensive revision of industrial wholesale prices, as well as of agricultural and import prices and various "tariff" rates (affecting freight, power, etc.), although no details were disclosed.[29] But while these moves appeared to signify the government's desire to rationalize the price structure, there was no sign of any intent to revive the idea

[25] *Loc. cit supra* (fn. 5). See also Henry Schaefer, "Zhivkov's Great Society," Radio Free Europe Research, Sept. 23, 1968.
[26] *Novo Vreme*, No. 10, 1968.
[27] *Loc. cit. supra* (fn. 26).
[28] *Ikonomichesko Zhivot* (Sofia), Oct. 3, 1968.
[29] *Durzhaven Vestnik*, Nov. 5, 1968.

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of permitting market forces to determine prices for even a restricted category of consumer goods.

Both the July Plenum and the November 1968 decree, which codified the revised "new system of management," [30] reiterated the goals of enterprise self-support and profitability, although it is difficult to see how the individual enterprise could strive to realize these goals in any meaningful way in view of the retightened limitations on its autonomy. The measures proposed for the purpose of stimulating self-support and profitability included increased use of internal financing and bank loans (still to be coupled, however, with subsidies of a "temporary character"); tighter bank control (two new banks —the Bulgarian Industrial Bank and the Bulgarian Agricultural and Trade Bank—were given primary responsibility for industrial and rural financing); ceilings on capital investments, together with a new system of interest rates on borrowed capital; and the introduction of new "uniform criteria" governing the internal funds of enterprises and taxation. This last proposal was made necessary partly by the confusion arising from the welter of different and often impractical criteria introduced before 1968, and partly by the need to adjust those criteria to the revised economic blueprint. In the area of income distribution, however, the "multifactoral" system of wage criteria was to be retained and even expanded so as to apply to basic wage scales as well as bonuses. The goal was now stated to be the formulation of "long-term norms" taking particular account of technological changes.

Workers' participation in enterprise affairs, already meager under the pre-1968 reform blueprint, also seems to have been curtailed. The new "rules" established by the November 1968 decree and further elaborated in February 1969 with regard to the operation of the former "production committees"—now renamed "economic committees"—enlarged the rights of the docile trade union organization and made the enterprise director committee chairman,[31] thus reducing the role of the workers' collective to the point where "poor representation" of the workers was officially acknowledged.[32]

In agriculture, the trend since 1968 has been toward aping the organizational structure and methods of industry through the adoption of new forms of horizontal and vertical integration, such as "agricultural-industrial complexes" with up to more than 30,000 hectares of land and a population of about 50,000, or so-called "industrial-farm conglomerates" [33]; through the establishment of "district trusts" of state farms; and through greater assimilation of collective and state farms, making the income of collective farm members and state farm workers over and above 90 percent of the basic rates dependent on profitability.[34] These measures, some of which are reminiscent of the pre-reform period, raise familiar questions regarding the efficiency and viability of mammoth-size farms and "agrogorod"-type units. In any event, it is in the agricultural sector that the greatest changes are currently taking place—perhaps as a result of the sharp 8.7-percent decline in gross agricultural output in 1968, only partially remedied by a 2-percent recovery in 1969.[35] Whether or not, and to what degree, the recent measures toward integration and specialization will be successful remains to be seen.

In the field of foreign trade, the effect of the policy reversal signaled by the July 1968 Plenum made itself felt in the form of legislative measures enacted in November 1968 and June 1969 to restrict direct dealings between Bulgarian economic trusts and foreign enterprises,[36] which had apparently been permitted experimentally under the provisions of the 1965 Theses. These measures were followed by much more stringent action in November 1969 on the heels of Premier Zhivkov's disclosure of "gross violations of financial discipline" by the Merchant Fleet Super-trust and its export-import department.[37] A new foreign trade law enacted shortly thereafter made it clear that no real autonomy would henceforth be permitted for any organization below the Foreign Trade Ministry.[38]

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30 This decree included four sets of "rules" covering economic trusts, state enterprises, foreign trade, and wages; and ten "ordinances" dealing with planning, profits, enterprise funds, contracts, budget contributions, enterprise-bank relations, purchase and sale of farm output, enterprise mergers and pricing of joint supplies, distribution of products and services among enterprises, and internal cost-accounting.

31 See *Durzhaven Vestnik*, Nov. 15, 1968, and Feb. 7, 1969.

32 *Trud*, June 7, 1969.

33 *Rabotnichesko Delo*, Dec. 1, 1968, Nov. 16, 1969, and Jan. 23, 1970; also *Zemedelsko Zname*, Dec. 4 and 23, 1969. This trend was confirmed and "codified" by the April 1970 Central Committee Plenum (see *Rabotnichesko Delo*, April 29-30, 1970).

34 The latter measures were enacted in a February 1969 decree. See *Durzhaven Vestnik*, Feb. 25, 1969.

35 *Statisticheski Godishnik* (Statistical Yearbook), 1968, and *Rabotnichesko Delo*, Jan. 25, 1970. *Cf.* also the author's "Political Factors in East-West Trade," *East Europe*, October 1969.

36 See *Durzhaven Vestnik*, Nov. 19, 1968, and June 6, 1969.

37 *Rabotnichesko Delo*, Nov. 5, 1969.

38 *Ibid.*, Nov. 21, 1969.

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The Reforms in Perspective

In summary, then, Bulgaria in the 1960's has had not one, but two blueprints for economic reform. The pre-1968 blueprint, even though it never renounced central planning and management of the economy to any substantial degree, was nevertheless forward-looking in spirit and envisaged a number of liberalizing and rationalizing changes similar to those projected elsewhere in Eastern Europe. It should be stressed, however, that despite years of experimentation, "refinements," and often lively discussion, few of these features were actually implemented in practice, and where changes were made, they were often inadequately thought out, confusing, and counterproductive. Premier Zhivkov himself stated at the July 1968 Plenum that "even today we lack the mechanism to implement some of the basic principles of the new system . . . and wherever the mechanism has been worked out, it has not yet been applied." [39] Still, until 1968, the provisions of the 1965 Theses were regarded as desiderata.

The 1968 blueprint, however, signaled a decisive swing away from the progressive features of the Theses. Centralized planning was to be expanded rather than narrowed; compulsory indices were to be increased, not reduced; and the idea of permitting some prices to be freely determined by market forces was in effect laid to rest. All that remained of the original blueprint was the stress on self-support, profitability, and material incentives, to be implemented by price reforms from above and by expanded reliance on financial and fiscal controls wielded by central authority. And the regime remains substantially wedded to Stalinist-type economic priorities.

The official rationale for the 1968 economic model is the "objective necessity" to take advantage of the "scientific-technical revolution," which —according to Zhivkov's Report to the July 1968 Plenum—"makes it possible under socialist conditions to administer the economy in such a way as to prevent any break in the chain, to avoid duplication, and to reach full coordination of functions and activities among the individual units." [40] But "computerized" central planning hardly seems feasible in a technically backward society like Bulgaria's—at least for some time to come. Indeed, the Plenum itself indirectly recognized this when it called for a "unified information system" requiring "23,000 highly-skilled specialists by 1980" [41]—and even then it failed to discern the need for thousands more technicians of various types and the many kinds of sophisticated equipment required to run society in the electronic age. Zhivkov's justification for the 1968 reversal therefore seems too unrealistic to be taken seriously.

It appears much more plausible that the explanation for the about-face lies in the reluctance of the regime to let the winds of change blow too hard for fear that, as in Czechoslovakia, they might possibly endanger the tight grip of the party over society. The proceedings of the July 1968 Plenum, as well as developments since then, have made it abundantly clear that the regime does not intend to let the primacy of the party be challenged even in the economic sphere.[42]

One might argue that the relatively backward Bulgarian economy can better afford to proceed with the model of central planning and command than a more developed one, and that consequently the pressures for change are not serious enough to propel the regime toward economic liberalization. But while the costs and burdens of over-centralization are perhaps less obvious in the context of present Bulgarian economic conditions, they are nevertheless real and likely to gain in importance as the country attains a higher level of economic development.[43] Meanwhile, the regime continues to move back, in both word and deed, toward the old "command" economic model at home and toward closer integration and "congruence" with the Soviet economy internationally.[44]

[39] Zhivkov's report to the Plenum, *ibid.*, July 25, 1968.

[40] *Ibid.* The same theme was stressed again at the September 1969 Central Committee Plenum (*Rabotnichesko Delo*, Oct. 25, 1969).

[41] *Rabotnichesko Delo*, July 27, 1968.

[42] The uncompromising attitude of the BCP leadership and its insistence upon tighter central controls over all sectors of the economy were evidenced most recently by the decisions of the September 1969 Plenum (see fn. 40), as well as by Zhivkov's repeated statements since October 1969 (see Michael Costello, "Economic Units Under Fire in Bulgaria," Radio Free Europe Research Report, Dec. 3, 1969) and lead articles in the party organ *Otechestven Front* (e.g., Jan. 20, 1970).

[43] Results of the 1969 economic plan were disappointing, and more modest targets were set for 1970 (see *Rabotnichesko Delo*, Nov. 20, 1969, and Jan. 25, 1970).

[44] Implementing a decision by the July 1968 Plenum to effect a closer "linking of our economy with that of the Soviet Union through specialization and cooperation in production," various steps were taken during 1969 to expand Bulgarian-Soviet trade with the aim of increasing the Soviet share in Bulgaria's total foreign trade to 60 percent by 1970. At the opening of the Bulgarian exhibition in Moscow last September, the trend towards closer congruence with the Soviet economy was underscored by Premier Zhikov: see *Rabotnichesko Delo*, Sept. 27, 1969.

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Moscow's Strategic Doctrine

THOMAS B. LARSON: *Disarmament and Soviet Policy, 1964-1968.*
Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentiss-Hall, Inc., 1969.
WILLIAM R. KINTNER and HARRIET FAST SCOTT: *The Nuclear Revolution in Soviet Military Affairs.*
Norman, Okla., University of Oklahoma Press, 1968.

Reviewed by Matthew P. Gallagher

DR. LARSON'S BOOK on Soviet arms control policy is the outgrowth of a study undertaken by the Russian Institute of Columbia University (New York) for the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. It complements an earlier study produced by the Institute for the same sponsor: Alexander J. Dallin's *The Soviet Union and Disarmament: An Appraisal of Soviet Attitudes and Intentions* (New York, Praeger, 1965), which covered the development of Soviet arms control policy up to the end of the Khrushchev era, where the present book begins. Like the earlier book, Larson's study draws on the work of specialists, whose collaboration—in the form of written contributions and oral discussions—was invited by the Institute as part of the preparatory phase of the project.

The subject matter of the book falls into two parts. The first part, comprising the first six chapters, covers the main trends in Soviet political, economic, and military affairs since the fall of Khrushchev. The second part, comprising the last seven chapters, deals with Soviet arms control policy proper. The links between the two parts are slender, not because the author fails to draw the appropriate connections, but because he believes that Soviet arms control policy has been lagging during the last few years.

The key assumption on which this judgment is based, however, is no longer valid: namely, that the strategic arms balance between the Soviet Union and the United States is so sharply tipped in the latter's favor that the Soviet Union would be disadvantaged by an agreement aimed at stabilizing the existing relationship. It is now clear—as it was not when the book was written—that the Soviet Union has redressed the balance as far as the major category of strategic weapons systems—the ICBM—is concerned. The author's judgments would surely have been different had he known that this change in the strategic relationship was about to occur: he implied as much in stating (p. 111) that the key obstacle to Soviet-US agreements on strategic arms limitation was the disparity in military power between the two sides. "If the USSR were to achieve a position of real equality," he pointed out, "some of the current American and Soviet arms control proposals on nuclear weapons systems might become negotiable."

As it is, the author dismisses the possibility of serious negotiations for a curb on nuclear weapons competition as so remote that he does not even list strategic arms limitation among the possible subjects of future arms control agreements. It is, in all likelihood, at least partly due to the same conception of the strategic realities that the author's judgments regarding Soviet interest in other measures of arms control are also somewhat negative. Indeed, the book has very little to say about Soviet

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"interest" in any aspect of arms control. To point this out is not to argue with the author's assessment of the situation as it appeared at the time his book was written: it is simply to suggest that the evidence bearing on the question is no longer the same as it was then.

Having said all this, it is only fair to point out that the virtues of Dr. Larson's study are many. His survey of recent trends in Soviet policy, presented in the first part of the book, is one of the best brief histories of the post-Khrushchev regime available. It encompasses the whole range of evidence relevant to the story, from the obscure details of Kremlin political maneuvering to the statistical indices of economic growth; yet the author's mastery of the subject is such that his account is lucid without being superficial, and comprehensive without being complex.

In his handling of evidence, Larson tends toward cautious conservatism. He is satisfied to provide the "reasonable" explanation of events, shying away from speculation about the role of imponderable factors in Soviet behavior. This manifests itself quite clearly in his reserved approach to leadership conflict as a factor influencing Soviet policy. For example, there was some evidence to suggest that the Soviet leaders initially had considerable difficulty in reaching agreement on the Soviet response to President Johnson's invitation for US-Soviet strategic arms limitations talks in his January 1967 State of the Union message. Larson, however, does not explore these indications—which were admittedly indirect—and prefers to stick with the fact that the Soviet government did eventually accept the US invitation. This is not to question Larson's judgment, but merely to illustrate his cautious approach to evidence and his sense of what is relevant.

When the passage of time has reduced the importance of the events of the 1964–68 period, Larson's book will retain its value as an objective and careful analysis of Soviet arms control policy. It "fixes" the key reference points in a highly fluid and complex policy continuum. In this, it serves the main purpose of research in this field—to provide a platform from which future research may begin.

THE BOOK BY Dr. Kintner and Mrs. Scott is a collection of translations from the Soviet military press, loosely tied together in a thematic framework provided by an introduction, commentaries for each chapter, and a concluding summary. The subject of the study—the evolution of Soviet military doctrine under the Brezhnev-Kosygin regime—is a vitally important one, and much has happened in this field since Thomas W. Wolfe provided the last comprehensive analysis of Soviet military thinking in his *Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1964).

By far the most interesting development, from the standpoint of the American analyst, is the increased attention that Soviet military strategists have been giving to the problem of general nuclear war. The heightened Soviet interest in this subject in 1965–66 coincided with the expansion of the USSR's strategic forces and apparently reflected the growing confidence of the military theorists that the Soviet Union's "second-best" position in strategic weapons was not necessarily a permanent condition. It could also have reflected an effort to counter whatever complacency may have been engendered in the officers corps by Khrushchev's view that nuclear war would be madness.

As the Kintner-Scott study indicates, a major subject of discussion in Soviet military writings during recent years has been the concept of superiority—what it means and how it may be achieved. Two lines of thought have been advanced. One sees possibilities of achieving effective superiority through the clever employment of

Reviewers in This Issue

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KLAUS WESTEN—West German specialist on Soviet law and government, who has published widely in the field.

EBERHARD SCHINKE—Professor of Economics at the Justus-Liebig University in Giessen, Germany, and a well-known expert on the East German economy.

EUGENE KAMENKA—Head of the History of Ideas Unit at the Institute of Advanced Studies, Australian National University (Canberra); editor of the forthcoming *The Portable Karl Marx* (New York, Viking Press).

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forces in war. The other advocates a more direct approach to the problem.

The first school of thought, developed by such military writers as Marshal V. D. Sokolovsky and Major General M. I. Cherednichenko, can be summarized as follows: Superiority, these writers argue, is a temporary condition. It does not exist in the abstract, but relates to a particular relationship of forces, in a particular place, at a particular time. Hence, the problem of achieving superiority comes down to the problem of insuring a favorable relationship of forces at a given place and time. In nuclear war, the critical point of decision is the first blow; and by getting in the first blow, the Soviet Union can achieve effective superiority. Needless to say, these writers were not advocating preventive war. They were simply saying that if war is to take place, it is incumbent on the military planners to prepare to conduct operations in such a way as to inflict maximum damage on the enemy while minimizing damage to the Soviet Union.

The other line of thought was advanced for the first time by a military theorist named Colonel V. I. Bondarenko.[1] Directly disputing the idea that reliance could be placed on a kind of makeshift superiority achieved through a clever employment of forces at the outbreak of war, he argued that real superiority must be achieved in peacetime. Moreover, he made it clear that he was not speaking of some vague sort of "moral-political" superiority such as Khrushchev used to talk about. Superiority, he said, is strictly a matter of possessing the "quantity and quality of weapons and combat equipment" to "defeat" the enemy.

Both themes have now become common in Soviet military literature. Their currency does not necessarily reflect a more militant mood on the part of the Soviet high command, still less an intention to adopt more aggressive policies toward the United States. It simply reflects the view that the Soviet Union cannot effectively advance its interests around the world unless its leaders can act with assurance that the country is prepared to face the risk of nuclear war.

Another significant development in recent Soviet writings on military strategy has been the growing attention paid to the development of conventional warfare capabilities. In this area, as in others, the trend in Soviet thinking has been toward accepting the American view that it is necessary to back up the strategic deterrent with a whole range of capabilities appropriate to all kinds of wars. As in the case of Soviet theorizing about nuclear war, this trend does not necessarily portend a more aggressive Soviet policy. It simply means that Soviet military theorists are trying to bring their doctrine into line with the responsibilities that current realities might thrust upon the Soviet armed forces.

Kintner and Scott put a more dramatic interpretation on these developments in Soviet military doctrine. They see them as evidence of the "constant Soviet drive for superiority, waged by the party, in all of the manifest forms which military power might develop." There is no room in their interpretation for the possibility that the Soviet "political and military hierarchy" (which is assumed to have authorized all these writings) could be less than omniscient; that it could hold one view at one time and a different view at another; that it might not be able to enforce complete control over all Soviet military writers—or that it could be split within itself. As a result, their commentaries fail to reflect the dynamic aspects of the developments they chronicle. This is unfortunate because there is much more to be drawn from the valuable and well-selected documents they have assembled than the simple conclusion that the Soviet Union is "unswervingly committed to a nuclear strategy."

[1] Writing in *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, No. 17, September 1966.

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Crime and Punishment

ROBERT CONQUEST, ED.: *Justice and the Legal System in the USSR.*
Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1968.
IVO LAPENNA: *Soviet Penal Policy.*
Chester Springs, Pa., Defour Editions, 1968.
GLENN G. MORGAN: *Soviet Administrative Legality—*
The Role of the Attorney General's Office.
Stanford, Calif., Stanford University Press, 1962.

Reviewed by Klaus Westen

THE THREE BOOKS reviewed here deal with Soviet criminal law in the widest sense, or with institutions related to this branch.

The least convincing is the brief volume edited by Robert Conquest. Although the book is based on a wealth of source material and displays the customary appurtenances of scholarship, it somehow seems to lack a clearly defined focus. This is evident even from the title, which leads the reader to expect a comprehensive account of the Soviet judicial and legal system. Obviously such a sweeping topic could not possibly be dealt with in a book that runs to a mere 152 pages; so, failing that, one would at least expect to find an outline of the Soviet judicial system coupled with an exposition of the characteristic features of Soviet law. The particular topics examined by Conquest, however, appear to have been picked almost at random, representing at best only certain aspects of the overall subject suggested by the title.

To begin with, the book presents a cursory survey of the successive phases in the development of the Soviet legal and judicial systems. This is so brief and general, however, that the reader is left wondering what purpose it was intended to serve—especially since similar condensed accounts of the evolution of Soviet law are already numerous and seldom have anything new to offer.

Next, Conquest takes up the courts and the organs of judicial administration. While the chapter actually tells very little about the courts themselves, some sections of it, such as those dealing with the roles of defense counsel and the prosecutor's office, are well written and informative. Already here, Conquest begins to shift his attention to the area which evidently engages his main interest: criminal law and procedure, but—more exactly speaking—only the criminal law and procedures relating to political offenses. The author's view of the importance of this partcular area of criminal law is further underscored by his observations in the two following chapters on criminal procedures, on the Soviet concept of crime and explanations for its existence, and on the system of penalties. Conquest's treatment of these matters is essentially correct in the factual sense but rather narrow in scope.

In the very next chapter, the author does appear to shift away from a narrowly focused treatment to a more general discussion, this time of party control over the administration of justice and the concept of "socialist legality." Again, however, Mr. Conquest tells us less about party control or socialist legality proper than he does about certain legal and semi-legal instrumentalities that are openly used to ensure party control—such as the comrades'

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courts, the principle of "collective probation," the people's militia, and other forms of citizen participation in the administration of justice.

The two brief concluding chapters of the book deal with the subjects of legislation and statistics, but here, too, the primary emphasis is on criminal justice. These chapters touch on some basic issues of penal policy that have been debated in the Soviet Union since Stalin, such as the principle of analogy and the problem of proof. This discussion strikes one as having little connection with the content of the preceding chapters and was evidently introduced in order to provide the basis for Mr. Conquest's cautiously optimistic conclusions regarding the present state of Soviet justice and its future evolution.

To sum up, while the book provides useful information on a number of specific aspects of the Soviet legal system, it leaves the reader somewhat dissatisfied because of its lack of substantive unity and a systematically-developed theme.

MR. LAPENNA'S BOOK is quite different. Although the subject—Soviet penal policy and criminal law—is almost identical with that of the Conquest volume, Mr. Lapenna sticks consistently to what his title promises. Moreover, the author's express intent is simply to furnish the non-specialist reader with reliable information on the subject, which enables him to dispense with the cumbersome requirements of strict academic scholarship. This being the case, his brief introductory exposition of the Marxist concepts of the state, law, and crime is entirely appropriate, although the hazards of such summarizations are apparent in one passage (on p. 26) which tends to give the impression that the author has not fully undertsood the doctrine of the withering of the state.

Little exception can be taken, however, to the rest of Mr. Lapenna's presentation. After reviewing Soviet criminal legislation from 1917 to 1958, he takes up the subject of socialist legality and then examines the criminal law reforms of 1958. Subsequent chapters deal with the concepts of crime and criminal liability, punishments and educational measures, pre-trial proceedings, and court trials.

Although Lapenna quotes some interesting remarks of Lenin's that are helpful to an understanding of socialist legality, he regrettably has very little to say about Stalin and his devastating impact on Soviet criminal law. On the other hand, he presents a balanced assessment of the criminal law reform of 1958: he does not underestimate the improvements introduced by it, nor does he exaggerate their significance. He also surveys the divergent trends in Soviet penal policy since the 1958 reform and, last but not least, adduces solid evidence in support of his justifiably skeptical conclusions regarding the value of statutory guarantees, especially those relating to criminal procedure.

Lapenna reinforces his discussion with frequent examples from actual court proceedings, which render his account more graphic and alive. Where he criticizes, moreover, he does so on solid grounds and not on the basis of preconceptions, as for example in his assessment of the limitations of the still fairly young discipline of Soviet criminology. If there is any fault to be found, it is that the author sometimes confines himself for long stretches to the mere repetition of statutes. By and large, however, the book can be highly recommended to those who are interested in Soviet criminal law and penal policy, and who want reliable information presented in language that is understandable to the layman.

AN ENTIRELY DIFFERENT yardstick must be applied to Mr. Morgan's study, which is a scholarly monograph of a high order dealing in detail with an institution only briefly discussed in the other two books—namely, the Soviet *prokuratura*.

While Conquest and Lapenna (together with numerous other English and American authors) use the terms "Procuracy" and "procurator" in referring to this institution (in conformity with the Russian terms *prokuratura* and *prokuror*), Morgan follows the lead of Vladimir Gsovski in preferring the terms "Attorney General's Office" and "government attorney." This terminological difference is irrelevant in German, where the term *Staatsanwaltschaft* covers all the areas of competence of the Soviet institution, but it must be mentioned here in order to avoid any misunderstanding that the different English-language designations refer to different institutions. Morgan's terminology, it may be noted, has not gained wide acceptance among Anglo-American scholars of the Soviet legal system, but he is right in his contention that the term "procuracy" covers only part of the functions of the Soviet institution (the charging of criminal offenders and their prosecution in court being but one of these functions). Morgan's study addresses itself rather to what is the most important function of the Soviet Attorney General's Office—namely, that of "general supervision," or surveillance of the legality of Soviet government acts in the broadest sense.

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In the first part of his study, Morgan outlines the history of "general supervision" in Russia. The parallel he points to here between the Soviet *prokuratura* established by Lenin and the similar institution established by Peter the Great is as worthy of interest as is his tracing of the successive stages in the evolution of this agency in the Soviet period. In the second part of the book, the author proceeds to discuss the role of general supervision at the present time, with particular attention to the areas of jurisdictional competence, the methods of control, and the measures available to the *prokuratura* in fulfilling its supervisory function. He does all this with accuracy, expert knowledge, and critical detachment, providing the reader with a graphic picture of this peculiar government agency with its dual role of supervising the acts of the state administrative apparatus on the one hand, and of conducting criminal prosecutions on the other. The reader learns that in reality the Soviet *prokuratura* is not at all the unique institution that Soviet authors have always claimed it to be, but rather that it remains—or has again become—the typical instrument of autocratic Russian rule that it was intended to be at its inception under the Tsars. The problems and deficiencies that were characteristic of the Tsarist *prokuratura* have likewise been "taken over" by its Soviet successor.

Morgan concludes that the system of general supervision has functioned most effectively in periods of relative tranquility, whereas in periods of revolutionary turmoil other instrumentalities of control and enforcement have played a greater role. For all that, however, the Soviet *prokuratura* with its function of general supervision is, in the last analysis, a typically Russian and highly inadequate substitute for the multitude of public controls of legality which operate in a democratic state.

To lavish praise on Morgan's book, which was published as long ago as 1962, may seem superfluous at this late date since the work has already won universal scholarly recognition. Perhaps, however, a German reviewer may be allowed to express his own personal judgment that this study is one of the most genuinely solid and scholarly monographs on Soviet law yet produced in the West.

Ulbricht's Reich

DAVID CHILDS: *East Germany.*
New York, F. A. Praeger, 1969.

RODERICH KULBACH, HELMUT WEBER, and ECKART FORTSCH: *Parteien im Blocksystem der DDR. Funktion und Aufbau der LDPD und der NDPD.*
Koln, Wissenschaft und Politik, 1969.

H. JORG THIEME: *Die sozialistische Agrarverfassung— Ein Ausnahmebereich im Wirtschaftsystem der DDR.*
Stuttgart, Gustav Fischer, 1969.

Reviewed by Eberhard Schinke

GENUINELY RELIABLE STUDIES of the (East) German Democratic Republic are comparatively few in number, since most writings from inside that country must be viewed with skepticism, while the works of outside observers too often appear to be biased or superficial. David Childs' *East Germany*, however, is a notable example of a Western study that is both well-researched and objective in its approach. Not only does the author show a thorough knowledge of the country and its problems, but he consciously strives to portray the present features of East German society against the background of their origins and historical development and, on major questions of interpretation, makes a point of presenting opposing viewpoints before offering his own conclusions.

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Because it would patently be impossible, with such a treatment, to give equal attention to all aspects of East German society, Mr. Childs has wisely chosen to deal relatively briefly with economic matters and to place major emphasis on the political development and power structure of the GDR. Consequently, the chapters on the distribution and application of political power form the strongest part of the book. The author's treatment of the development and makeup of the political power centers and leadership strata and his description of the role of the lesser parties that coexist with the Socialist Unity Party are further enhanced by the inclusion of pertinent details and comments about leading political personalities.

Childs' chapters on education and the standard of living are less deserving of praise, being somewhat pedestrian in style as well as overly dependent on a few relatively unimpressive statistics. In dealing with education, the author fails to mention a matter that has been of much concern to the SED regime—namely, the impact of West German and other foreign radio and television broadcasts on the East German population—but it would perhaps be unfair to criticize him for that, since an outsider would have little factual evidence to go on. Again, in assessing living standards, Childs is handicapped by a lack of detailed information about the quality, design, packaging and availability of consumer goods—factors which cannot be ascertained from bare quantitative statistics but which nevertheless have a major bearing on the public's day-to-day reaction to economic conditions. In any case, despite the East German economy's growth in recent years and the country's present enjoyment of a higher living standard than exists anywhere else in Communist Eastern Europe, or for that matter in the USSR, the real standard for comparison and emulation continues to be the level attained in neighboring West Germany, with which communications are closer than the fortified demarcation line between the two states might lead one to suppose.

In one of his most novel and interesting chapters, entitled "East Germany Looks at Us," the author undertakes to describe how a foreign country (Britain in this case) is pictured to East Germans by their own ideologically-oriented information media. The chapter is highly instructive in that it shows how distortions of the images of foreign countries by the East German press reflect the regime's foreign policies.

In sum, Mr. Childs' *East Germany* is well worth reading. It treats a number of conditions and forces which, though they have received little attention in the past, could have an important influence on developments affecting the future of the GDR. Readers looking for pat solutions or complete explanations will perhaps be disappointed, for the author makes it clear that in his opinion East Germany's political, social and economic realities are entirely too complex to permit the drawing of broad conclusions based on an assessment of isolated phenomena. Nevertheless his thoughts and observations provide a valuable stimulus to discussion.

THE SECOND BOOK, by Kulbach, Weber and Fortsch, makes a thorough examination of East Germany's political parties, thus filling in the details of the East German party structure described only briefly and in a more general way by Childs. In addition to the Communist party organization, the Socialist Unity Party (SED), there are four minor parties: the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Liberal Democratic Party (LDPD), the National Democratic Party (NDPD), and the Democratic Peasant Party (DBD). These organizations have no ties with the political parties of West Germany despite certain similarities in nomenclature. They are autonomous in the formal sense, but as partners of the Communists in the "Antifascist Democratic Bloc" coalition, they are bound in all substantive matters by the policies of the SED. Present electoral procedures call for a single list of candidates in which all five parties (and some other organizations) are represented according to a prearranged ratio. The reasons for the maintenance of this multiparty facade are primarily tactical, the main one being to facilitate the mobilization of the non-Communist segments of the population behind the policy objectives of the Socialist Unity Party.

After describing the origins of the coalition system, the authors trace its development in East Germany since 1945, pointing out how various legal and *de facto* restrictions make it virtually impossible for the minor parties to be anything more than "camp followers" of the SED. They do not altogether rule out the possibility that potentially autonomous forces still exist, or could be formed, within the "other" parties, and that these forces could initiate moves to regain real independence if the SED were to relax its present tight controls. While such a possibility should certainly be considered, it seems far more likely, however—for the foreseeable future—that developments will move in

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the opposite direction, and that the "outside" parties will gradually atrophy with the absorption of their functions by organizations under direct SED control.

As its title indicates, the present book deals in detail only with two of the minor parties, the LDPD and the NDPD, with the CDU and DBD apparently to be covered in a further study now in preparation. The authors' detailed description of the organization and activities of the two parties up to 1967, supplemented by the texts of the party statutes and an abundance of quoted materials, provides instructive and at times surprising insights into the political life of the GDR.

MR. THIEME'S STUDY of socialized agriculture in East Germany is noteworthy because it deals with a subject which has received little critical attention by Western (including even German) scholars. The author approaches the subject from the standpoint of the general question whether an industrial society governed by socialist principles can give agriculture equal status with other branches within the overall economy. Taking East Germany as a test case, he first examines the various forms of ownership of the means of agricultural production (state, collective, and private) as well as the related operating methods and principles of distribution, coming to the conclusion that East German agriculture is much less integrated into the overall socialist system than are other branches of the economy and must therefore be regarded as "a special area" (*Ausnahmebereich*).

In the second part of his study, the author first examines the planning methods and implementary mechanisms employed by the authorities in charge of agriculture, and he then takes up the system of agricultural prices, doing much to clarify the complexities of subsidies and price support measures. He also discusses a trend, which has become perceptible in East German agriculture since 1963, away from direct state controls toward the wider application of economic criteria and indirect methods of control.

It is unfortunate that Thieme's book was completed just before the East German government proclaimed a new agricultural policy envisioning a reform of the existing control machinery and the consolidation of agriculture and the foodstuffs industry into what might be described as a new "agrobusiness" branch of the economy. The author did manage to include a sketch of the basic principles of the new program in an appendix, although —again unfortunately—these principles were further amended after the book's publication.

Notwithstanding its now outdated passages, Thieme's work will continue to be an important source for all students of the problems of agriculture in socialist countries. Its basic information is sound, and the picture that it presents of East Germany's pre-1969 agricultural organizations and control devices is still substantially applicable to the situation today.

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Marx in Stereotype

ROBERT C. TUCKER. *The Marxian Revolutionary Idea.*
New York, W. W. Norton & Co., 1969.

Reviewed by Eugene Kamenka

THE UNITED STATES has shared little in the intellectual and cultural traditions of European social democracy. American sociology has not displayed that concern with class which has been central to macro-sociology in Europe, and American society draws its moral and ideological fervor from religious rather than philosophical foundations. The overwhelming majority of established non-radical American academics writing on Marx today have come to Marx as a living thinker only through Soviet, East European and Asian communism. The result is a tendency in much "respectable" American writing to concentrate on Marx as an ideologist and a revolutionist, as the prophet-founder of one of the world's great religions. Together with this goes a certain insensitivity to Marx's position in European culture and in the development of serious social and historical thinking. Marx as a scientist of society or as a philosopher of the human condition is treated patronizingly or is ignored.

Prof. Tucker is a case in point. His *Philosophy and Myth in Karl Marx*, published in 1961, saw Marx as primarily a religious thinker, whose philosophy and sociology were totally subordinated to a Promethean futurology and shaped by a neurotic rejection of the real world of conflict, dependence and insecurity. Prof. Tucker, of course, expounded this view at a respectably serious level, exhibiting a genuine grasp of Marx's intellectual development and of the details of the Marxian system. He was one of the first Americans to emphasize, completely correctly, the continuity of Marx's thought and the central position which the Fichtean-Hegelian-Feuerbachian concept of alienation occupied in all stages of Marx's thinking from 1843 onward. Nevertheless, the result was a remarkably one-sided and "closed" picture of Marx, as well as of Fichte, Schelling and Hegel; the suggestiveness, fertility and professional acumen of these thinkers, and in particular of Marx and Hegel, were somehow entirely subordinated to their religious, Promethean strivings. All this, no doubt, was reassuringly familiar to a culture permeated by religion and concern with the individual as an emotional unit; it was, perhaps, not so well received overseas.

The Marxian Revolutionary Idea, a collection of seven extremely well-written and interesting essays that have all been previously published, is a natural sequel to Professor Tucker's earlier book on Marx and continues very much in the same vein. Marx, the author insists, is above all a revolutionist; all of his writings—including *Das Kapital*—are studies in revolution. This leads Prof. Tucker to present us with a rather Leninist Marx and to reject bluntly, but without much argument, the portrait of Marx as a central figure in social democratic thought, an interpretation emphasized, for example, by George Lichtheim. Prof. Tucker presents Marx as a very much more consistent and coherent thinker than he actually was. He does this by welding together in one ambiguous whole the concepts of revolution as political uprising, revolution as social transformation, and revolution as a technological event. That Marx strove to synthesize these concepts is perfectly true, but the social democrat who takes seriously the details in *Das Kapital* can argue that Marx himself had recognized the self-ameliorating tendencies in capitalism and that the development which Marx described as the socialization of capitalism from within was a very different development from the revolution proclaimed in *The Communist Manifesto*.

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Prof. Tucker is not unaware of these complexities, but he chooses to organize his very real knowledge of Marx around a comparatively simple and one-sided view of the man's thought. The first chapter, "The Marxian Revolutionary Idea," emphasizes the religious revolutionary motive in Marx's thought, a version which has been popularized by the Bolsheviks. The second chapter, "Marx and Distributive Justice," presents very well indeed the reasons for Marx's polemic against the idea of justice and reduces this polemic, again quite correctly, to Marx's insistence that no dualism or contradiction, no balance between opposing interests, could be allowed to survive in the ultimate Communist society. Chapter 3, "The Political Theory of Classical Marxism," discusses the state as alienated social power and contrasts this with the competing Marxist theme of the state as organized coercion; the result is an elegant, somewhat unphilosophical, version of the social dialectic discussed in much greater detail in Prof. Shlomo Avineri's *The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx* and in the reviewer's own *Ethical Foundations of Marxism.* The fourth chapter, "Marxism and Modernization," emphasizes the extent to which Marxism treats the emergence of modern capitalist society out of feudalism as a model of the modernization process. Prof. Tucker's discussion of this topic, which is cast in the light of recent-day studies (and experiences) of non-bourgeois ways of modernization, is concise, incisive and sensible. Yet it is typical of his tendency to avoid complex and really exciting themes that he passes very lightly over Marx's treatment of "Oriental despotism" and the "Asiatic mode of production."

The remaining three essays in the book, "Marxism and Communist Revolutions," "The Deradicalization of Marxist Movements," and "Marx and the End of History," continue in the same sensible, intelligent and comparatively uncomplex way. The first demonstrates that the Russian Revolution has not proved to be a model for subsequent Communist revolutions and re-emphasises the insight that Communist ideology is more an ideology of revolution in underdeveloped societies than an ideology of the transition from capitalism to socialism. The second essay argues that a deradicalization tendency with its roots in early Soviet history has come to much fuller fruition since Stalin's death—a development which parallels the deradicalization of the social democratic movement as a consequence of its worldly success, in Kautsky's day. The final chapter depicts Marx as first and foremost a "futurologist" whose genius lay not in grasping the means by which the glorious future would be realized but in his power to visualize the end result. "In an age when utopianism has become the only realism," Prof. Tucker concludes, "these powers are needed as never before." He, of course, is right in stressing that Marx greatly overestimated the importance of material and technological development as the prerequisite for the maturation of human society, but there is something incredible to unregenerate Westernizing rationalists like myself in the fact that Prof. Tucker should seriously treat Gandhi and Martin Luther King as teachers whose intellectual significance can be set beside Marx's. This, I suppose, is my fundamental objection to Prof. Tucker's intelligent and informed writing on Marx and his relation to communism—it dismisses as irrelevant almost everything that seems to me of crucial importance and fertility in Marx and stresses what I consider to be his mistakes.

The classical Marxist preoccupation with abolishing private property, increasing economic production, and introducing rational social planning as necessary and sufficient conditions for human happiness has lost much of its plausibility and appeal; the industrial revolution under communism has proved itself at least as horrible as any industrial revolution under capitalism. International tension, genocide, colonial exploitation, invasion and military oppression are no longer uniquely the prerogatives of non-socialist or non-Communist states; the myth of the socialist brotherhood of man and of new communist norms in international relations between socialist nations was finally shattered in Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and on the banks of the Amur. Communist Marxism as an ideology has proved itself—as Prof. Tucker emphasizes—an ideology for backward nations. The proletariat in advanced industrial societies no longer needs an ideological palliative for the ills of industrialization and no longer dreams of the idealized village *Gemeinschaft* of the promised Communist utopia. In these circumstances it is not surprising that Marx, the economist and scientist of society, is being ousted from radical thinking. He has been replaced by two other Marxes—Marx, the moralist and philosopher of the human condition, and Marx, the anarchist revolutionist. Prof. Tucker knows very well that this latter Marx is a pseudo-Marx, but his whole approach is one that blurs the distinction, that fails to remind us constantly and in detail that for Marx every positive social protest was an act of rational criticism and every true revolutionary was not a romantic terrorist but an analyst of the social situation who could *think* as well as act.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Maoism Evaluated

To The Editors: Richard M. Pfeffer in his article "The Pursuit of Purity: Mao's Cultural Revolution" (November-December 1969) gives Chairman Mao too much credit for having gone beyond his totalitarian predecessors in his effort to attack the problem of recurring institutionalization, or even in the attention he has paid to the problem of maintaining revolutionary élan.

Hitler and Stalin both knew that a totalitarian movement would degenerate into simply another absolutist bureaucracy if ruled primarily through the state and the machinery of violence. The paradox of totalitarianism in power, Hanna Arendt has stated, is that the possession of all instruments of governmental power and violence in one country is not an unmixed blessing for a totalitarian movement: "Power means a direct confrontation with reality, and totalitarianism in power is constantly concerned with overcoming this challenge."

Pfeffer may describe Mao's techniques as "counter-institutions" intended to deal with the abstract problems of ideological purity and "organizational goal displacement," but on the level of political behavior they are psychological and organizational techniques for the mobilization of total loyalty, their principal characteristic being a lack of concrete content and of determined and obtainable objectives.

Nowhere does Pfeffer hint that the elevation—indeed deification—of the leader above party and society, as well as the "discovery" of vanguard elements outside the party, are phenomena which have characterized all modern totalitarian systems. The analogies with Hitler and Stalin are too numerous and obvious to need recounting. The aims may be entirely different, but the technique is still mass demagogy—the use of propaganda directed at fictional conspiracies to give atomized masses the feeling of commitment to the single-minded goals of the leader.

In his sympathetic treatment of the Cultural Revolution not only does Pfeffer overcredit Mao's originality, but he completely ignores the distinction and often the contradiction between intentions and consequences. No doubt, as he says, Maoist methods are "difficult for most Western minds to accept," for they are at worst anti-humanist and at best anti-liberal, anti-intellectual and anti-cultural. It is the liberal humanist of whatever hemisphere who finds these methods unacceptable, not the Western mind as such.

John Dewey once observed that anyone can proclaim high ideals but that the real world is a consequence of the methods used to achieve those ideals. The methods employed by the Maoists may indeed create an egalitarian society of "mass participation," but they may also raise totalitarianism to a new level.

For example, is there not something terribly artificial, manipulative, and even grotesque in the Red Guards' "defiance of authority"? Let us imagine a rightist Cultural Revolution in the United States. In this fantasy, the President and almost all the leaders in Washington, including J. Edgar Hoover and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, with the fanatical support of all the media in the country, and with the acquiescence and backing of the army and the police, call on the youth to struggle against the "Communist-roaders" in the State Department and other bureaucracies and to condemn and drag out the revisionist chieftain, Senator Fulbright, and other political figures who are "soft on communism." One can envision the eager response of the youth, particularly mob elements, to "defy authority." Germany, of course, saw something along these lines in the 1930's. In China in 1967 and 1968 the officially endorsed "revolutionary act of defying authority" was equally fatuous, yet observers like Pfeffer seem to accept it at face value.

Surely it was hardly revolutionary defiance to attack poor old Liu Shao-chi and the helpless bureaucrats on the orders of the ultimate leader and with the backing of the army and the entire propaganda establishment. Frankly, it was all great fun until the leader commanded it to cease. The real revolutionary act, of course, would have been to defy the authority of Mao Tse-tung or that of the army. But unfortunately, there was no "Weatherman faction" among the Red Guards.

There are numerous other disparities between the avowed nature and professed achievements of the Cultural Revolution on the one hand, and the Chinese reality on the other. How many of the masses, for example, actually participated in the "great upheaval" in a meaningful way? Was it not really again an elite of the masses, together with "the mob," which, with mixed motives, dominated the action? Does the peasant, or the urban youth sent to join him, now have more control over his destiny than he did four years ago? Have human rights in China been improved, and are public institutions actually more responsive now to popular interests? If policies were "meaningfully determined by the people" would not the results be larger private plots, higher wages, and a continued exodus to the cities?

My philosophical disagreement with Pfeffer stems from the impression that he accepts the Maoist goals—equalitarianism and mass participation—as the essence of the good society. The thought does not occur in his article that realization of these goals may be only a partial and not a definitive answer to the problems of human affairs.

Mao's intentions obviously coincide with part of the liberal-humanist ideal. In Rheinhold Niebuhr's terms, he is a child of light, whereas Hitler was a child of darkness. Those who sympathize with Mao are likewise concerned with the problem of man's self-interest and excessive individualism, but the search for higher possibilities of justice and a greater height for man's spirit involves much more. Niebuhr summed it up this way:

The problem of the individual and the community cannot be solved at all if the height is not achieved where the sovereign source and end of both individual and communal existence are discerned, and where the limits are set against the idolatrous self-worship of both individuals and communities.[1]

Harold Brown
(pseudonymous observer of
Asian affairs)

[1] *The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness*, New York, Scribner's, 1944, p. 85.

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MR. PFEFFER REPLIES: I am grateful to Mr. Brown for his criticisms. He raises in his letter a number of serious, enduring questions about "reality" in China, about the relationship between intentions and consequences, and about the relationship between means and ends. Unhappily, to my mind, he does not take his own very difficult questions seriously enough. He tends all too often to treat his questions and implied or explicit answers as a club to beat China, rather than as open questions, the "answers" to which are neither simple, certain, nor even ascertainable.

It may be that Mr. Brown is correct in his apparent belief that the mere invocation of the names of Hitler and Stalin, the vague, supporting references to "totalitarianism," and his moving reassertion of "liberal humanist" values are enough to convince his readers of the accuracy and rectitude of his conclusions about China. We have, after all, been prepared for years to bow down before the juggernaut of totalitarian analysis, which—conveniently for us—identifies our enemies of one era, the Nazis, with our "enemies" of other eras, the Soviet Union and China. Yet the validity of this mode of analysis has been increasingly questioned in the 1960's by students of comparative politics. A recent review of totalitarian analysis, whose author attempts rather unconvincingly to salvage some meaning from the mode, concludes in part that the term "totalitarianism . . . as heretofore conceived has now been declared either intrinsically devoid of utility as an analytical construct or so burdened with extraneous connotations as to negate whatever utility it might once have possessed."[1] If Mr. Brown wants to make a case for a "totalitarian," Hitlerist, Stalinist China, he must do more than merely label it as such and raise "liberal humanist" issues; he must define what he means and then adduce evidence.

Moreover, the appeal of his arguments rests on a number of implicit assumptions about comparative developments and on the related avoidance of at least one critical issue. By dealing facetiously with the issues of democracy and authority in China today, he tends to make light of the profound, perhaps insoluble, problem that any society faces in attempting to reconcile "modernization" and "democracy." Would he argue, for example, that England's industrial revolution was carried out more democratically or at a lower human cost, relative to the nature of England's problems, than China's? If so, I remain to be convinced. And further, if it is fair to conclude that for Mr. Brown being "anti-humanist" is even more evil than being "anti-liberal, anti-intellectual and anti-cultural," then how does he evaluate China's development relative to India's? Does he believe that the chronic starvation, corruption and gross inequalities one associates with India are suggestive of a more humane society or polity than China's? In the concrete, Mr. Brown's humanism seems hardly distinguishable from his liberalism.

Let me respond briefly to several of his more specific criticisms of my article. First, I do not "ignore" the distinction between intentions and consequences. Rather, I explicitly state that I focus on "what Mao has been attempting to accomplish through the Cultural Revolution." If my stated assumption—that "Mao's intentions are significant in shaping the . . . CR"—is accepted, then it seems entirely appropriate to consider Mao's goals in trying to understand the Cultural Revolution. This admittedly partial focus is particularly salutary, it seems to me, within the context of American scholarship, which too frequently tends to slight the meaning of the CR for Mao and for many Chinese and to condemn it for failing to achieve liberal values.

Second, Mr. Brown himself appears to be somewhat sympathetic to Mao's goals. He asserts that Mao's aims are entirely different from Hitler's and Stalin's and that "Mao's intentions obviously coincide with part of the liberal humanist ideal." He objects primarily to the so-called "totalitarian" techniques employed and to the alleged belief of mine (and by implication of Mao's) that Maoist goals are the "definitive answer to the problems of human affairs." Dealing with the last point first and speaking only for myself and not for Mao, who can speak for himself, I do believe that egalitarianism and participatory democracy are central elements of the good society. Does Mr. Brown disagree? On the other hand, nowhere do I suggest that other elements are not also important, nor do I intimate that there is *any* "definitive answer to the problems of human affairs"—and that includes liberalism.

As to the former point, Maoist techniques, labeled "totalitarian" by Mr. Brown, are techniques for implementing rapid social change. To my knowledge, there are no alternative techniques for dealing with the problem that are more pleasant or more effective, and those that do exist tend to produce highly inegalitarian, bureaucratized societies. Mr. Brown may indulge his own liberal concerns by talking of "totalitarianism," but I do not see that anything useful is added to the analysis by such name-calling. If we must seek a comprehensive framework for understanding Chinese politics today, I suggest that of *revolutionary rule*—which postulates that the demands of revolution in China must both be satisfied, simultaneously or sequentially in cycles. Within such a framework, Maoist techniques seem at least intelligible.[2]

Reasonable men may differ, perhaps, on the degree of originality attributable to Mao. I continue to believe, with Benjamin Schwartz and others, that Mao has made significant contributions. In a section of my paper that was cut for reasons of space from the published version, I argued that Stalin's terroristic purges, for example, left no positive legacy for the forces that tried to combat the development of a privileged stratum after his death. Stalin did not build a solid mass base to counterbalance the privileged stratum, nor did he train a new generation of revolutionaries. Consequently, the end of systematic terror after his death released the privileged stratum from its bonds, and that stratum quickly moved to consolidate its power as a new ruling class. Whether Maoist techniques will prove to be more effective in this respect cannot be determined at this time. But, notwithstanding Mr. Brown's attempt to lump those techniques with Stalin's, they are patently different. Where in China is the secret police? Where are the massive trials, the executions of leaders? And where are the concentration camps?

I wish to end as I begin, with a tribute. I am deeply moved by Mr. Brown's touching concern for "poor old Liu Shao-ch'i and the helpless bureaucrats"—like P'eng Chen, Chou Yang, Lo Jui-ch'ing, etc. Three cheers for "liberal humanism."

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[1] Robert Burrowes, "Totalitarianism: The Revised Standard Edition," *World Politics* (Princeton, N.J.), January 1969, pp. 272-94.

[2] I have introduced this idea in "Revolution and Rule: Where Do We Go From Here," forthcoming in the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* (Cambridge, Mass.), Vol. 2, No. 3.

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